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Celebrity Buzz

SATC stars flying solo?

pg 37

Gift Guide

Great picks for photo fun

pg 17

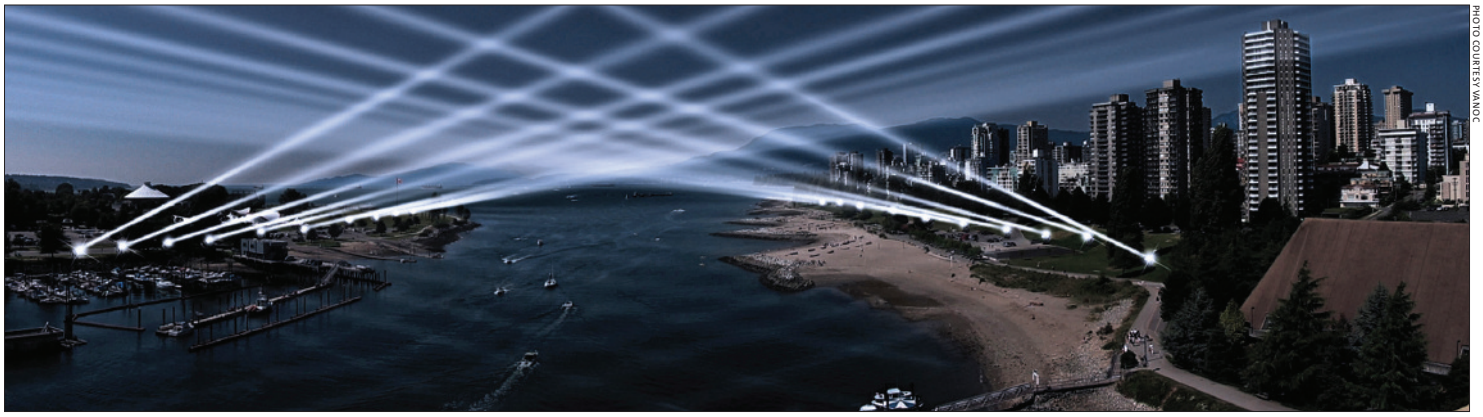

PHOTO COURTESY VANOC

Vectorial Elevation, a public art installation commissioned by VANOC and the City of Vancouver, will light up the night sky above English Bay with 20 searchlights during the 2010 Games.

Interactive lightshow set to dazzle

Public can choreograph lights online for installation to run from dusk to dawn during Games

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

The night sky above English Bay will blaze with light during the 2010 Games in a massive lightshow that will be seen from as far away as Richmond.

Vectorial Elevation, a temporary art installation by Mexican-born Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, features 20 robotic searchlights installed at Vanier Park and Second Beach.

The 10,000-watt searchlights will trace patterns — created online by people from around the world — in the night sky and will be visible from 15 kilometres away.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

"It's going to be spectacular," said Rich Newirth, the city's acting managing director of cultural services.

More than two million people will see the installation, which will run from dusk until dawn during the Games. It has previously been installed in Mexico, Spain, Ireland and France.

VANOC and the city commissioned the Vancouver version.

Vectorial Elevation is considered one of the largest art installations in the world. It is also hugely interactive, Newirth said.

"People actually can go online and choreograph the lights and the lights will respond to their interaction on the computer."

When the display was in Mexico City, more than 800,000 people went online to design their own light art, he added. People will be able to visit vectorialvancouver.net to design their show.

A personalized webpage will be created for each design and it is estimated that 130,000 different patterns will be created for a 24-day period, beginning Feb. 4.

"It's going to be quite a wonderful thing that people will really enjoy and remember."

News on the Move

What's this barcode for?
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

On the web
Visit metronews.ca for news updates

Kidnapped Alberta journalist freed after 15 months

Canadian journalist Amanda Lindhout, freed after 15 months of captivity in war-torn Somalia, said yesterday she was isolated, beaten and tortured, and dreamed of running through Vancouver's Stanley Park to stay sane and not lose hope.

"My day was sitting on a floor in a corner, 24 hours a day for the last 15 months," Lindhout said in an interview with CTV from Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia.

"There were times I was beaten, I was tortured," said the freelance journalist, her voice breaking, as she described her days in a dark, windowless room. "It was an extremely, extremely difficult situation."

Lindhout

Lindhout, 28, from Sylvan Lake in central Alberta, and Australian photographer Nigel Brennan were kidnapped Aug. 23, 2008. Somali officials said they were released yesterday, 459 days after their ordeal began.

Stories and reports conflicted about how much, if any, ransom was paid and by whom.

Lindhout said the families of the two hostages paid some money for her release, but didn't know how much.

Some published reports said $1 million was paid, but didn't say by whom.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Local

Thieves strike ferry terminal ATM

The ATM machine at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal was compromised by thieves, who installed a camera and card-reading equipment to steal people's PIN numbers. A customer noticed the camera yesterday, and police recommend that anyone who has used the machine since Nov. 18 contact their bank. METRO VANCOUVER

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
2009 Festival of Media Awards

News in brief

FLOODING The flood watch for parts of the west coast of Vancouver Island has been elevated to a flood warning. The River Forecast Centre in Victoria said yesterday heavy rains and melting snow are expected to lead to widespread flooding.

OLYMPICS Officials with the B.C. government, Ottawa and the Olympic security force say they had to scale back their last emergency preparedness exercise because of budget constraints. But emergency officials say they're still ready for next February's Winter Games.

PERSONAL DATA The B.C. government is under fire after the personal information of 1,400 welfare recipients was found in the hands of a public servant under investigation by the RCMP's commercial crimes unit and ICBC on an unrelated matter. METRO NEWS SERVICES

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Blogs Backbeat gives props to his Top 10 Unsung Guitar Heroes

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49	5, 10, 16, 19, 33 & 47 Bonus 24
BC 49	4, 12, 21, 27, 35 & 36 Bonus 5
Extra	20, 28, 65, 84

These results are not official.

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JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac performs on Granville Island yesterday during the unveiling of Atlantic Canada House.

East meets West

Olympic house to offer a taste of Atlantic Canada

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

Canada's four Atlantic provinces are planning a bash — an East Coast-style kitchen party to be exact — in the heart of Vancouver during the 2010 Games.

Atlantic Canada House will be situated on Granville Island, overlooking False Creek, and will operate daily during the Games, offering visitors a taste of all things East Coast.

"To say that Atlantic Canada has embraced the spirit of the Games doesn't do justice to how hard they've tried and how much they've supported what we're trying to do," said VANOC CEO John Furlong.

The house, which encompasses the Granville Island Stage, the Revue Stage and the Backstage Lounge, will welcome Atlantic athletes and their families and will host industry leaders to attract investment to the provinces.

It will also welcome thousands of tourists for food tastings and musical performances. A traditional kitchen party will go late into the night.

There will even be a photo booth, where people can have their picture taken with their favourite East Coast backdrop.

Musician Ashley MacIsaac, who helped announce the pavilion yesterday, said it was a wonderful opportunity for the world to see what Atlantic Canada has to offer, and for Atlantic Canadians to showcase their people and culture to the world.

Furlong, who is originally from Ireland, joked that Atlantic Canada was the only part of the country where he feels truly bilingual (he speaks Gaelic).

"The fact that we have parts of Canada that are closer to Europe than to British Columbia — that are here together working hard to create a Canadian program — is fantastic," he said.

City's home-ownership costs highest in Canada: Report

HOUSING It costs the average Vancouver household nearly 67 per cent of its income — by far the biggest amount in Canada — to own a standard detached bungalow, according to a report released yesterday by RBC Economics Research.

People who want to own a two-storey home have to shell out even more — nearly 75 per cent of their income — to afford their mortgage, property taxes and utilities.

Residents in the next priciest city, Toronto, spend 57.8 per cent of their incomes on two-storey homes and 48.6 per cent on bungalows.

Robert Hogue of RBC Economics Research said home-ownership costs are rising here because demand is growing faster than supply. "Why people are willing to spend so much in Vancouver is always something I've wondered," he said. "The best I can come up with is it's such a beautiful place, people are willing to spend more to live there." KRISTEN THOMPSON/ METRO VANCOUVER

Numbers

Cost of home ownership in Vancouver:
- Condo: $351,500. Income needed to afford it: $70,600
- Townhouse: $464,400. Income needed to afford it: $92,700.
- Bungalow: $610,700. Income needed to afford it: $122,000.
- Two-storey home: $678,900. Income needed to afford it: $135,500.

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Olympic transit passes up for grabs

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

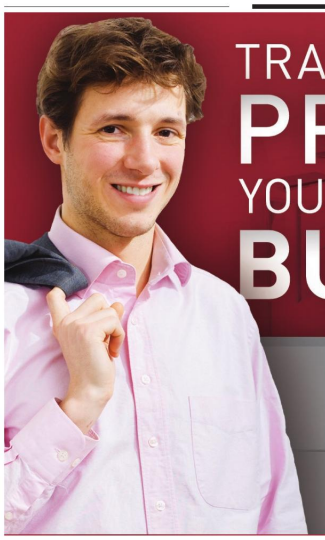
FARES Six-week Olympic transit passes go on sale tomorrow, TransLink announced yesterday.

Olympic transit pass

The credit-card-sized plastic passes, which carry images of winter sports, are one-and-a-half times the cost of a regular fare card, ranging in price from $110 to $204, depending on the number of zones.

They will be valid from Feb. 8 to March 21.

Transit fares are included in the price of Olympic tickets but are only valid on the day of the event. METRO VANCOUVER



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Woodward's graces pages of NYT
The New York Times has published a 1,200-word article on the Woodward's development in the Downtown Eastside. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Local activist detained

Indonesia arrests Greenpeace member after protest

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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GREENPEACE

Greenpeace activist Stephanie Goodwin at the APP mill in Indonesia on Tuesday.

A Greenpeace activist from Vancouver is one of 14 people being detained in Indonesia after the group protested at one of the world's largest pulp and paper mills, shutting down the facility.

Stephanie Goodwin, 36, who spoke to Metro Vancouver from her hotel room on the island of Sumatra, said she wanted people to know the mill is a massive contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Goodwin was on a boat near the mill as 12 Greenpeace activists scaled four cranes, then dangled there with banners reading "Climate Crime" and "Forest Destruction: You can stop this" to stall pulp exports.

"Indonesia is the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions and 80 per cent of their emissions come from deforestation and land degradation," Goodwin said.

She was arrested on Tuesday and spent nearly 14 hours at the police station, where she was interrogated with the other protesters.

"I don't know for certain what will happen," said Goodwin, who suspects she'll be deported today. Her passport has been taken away and is being held by police.

"I don't think it ever really feels pleasant or safe to be detained by the police in any fashion, no matter where.

"Of course I weigh the risks before doing an activity like this and for me, what's really important is providing outcomes that actually encourage climate change."

Activists protest 'kidnap the homeless act'

STIG NIELSEN
for Metro Vancouver

"Government is empowering police to force people into shelters that are already full."
Laura Track, Pivot Legal Society

BILL About a dozen activists gathered at a Vancouver police station yesterday morning to protest a government bill they say would allow police to force homeless people indoors during the Olympic Games.

B.C. passed the Assistance to Shelter act on Nov. 18 as a way to protect the homeless from extreme weather. Proponents argued authorities need a tool to prevent people who refuse to use shelters from freezing to death.

Vancouver Action spokesperson Sarah Stevenson called the government initiative, "the kidnap the homeless act." She linked it to the Olympics and said it's a way to hide the homeless from the world media.

"We all know it's unjust and undemocratic … I think it's safe to say the reason this bill was pushed through is the 2010 Olympic Games, once again, the elite is being placed ahead of the marginalized," said Stevenson.

Laura Track, a lawyer with the Pivot Legal Society, said the government needs to take steps to end homelessness, not to clean up the streets.

"Instead of taking steps to develop affordable housing, government is empowering police to force people into shelters that are already full."

Body found in Surrey backyard

DEATH Homicide detectives are investigating the discovery of a body in the backyard of a Surrey home after police received two anonymous 911 calls reporting a man was injured on 115 Avenue.

RCMP received the first call just before 2 a.m. yesterday and when they initially searched the area they found nothing.

About 90 minutes later, a second 911 call was placed and police returned to the neighbourhood, where they found a man dead in the backyard of a house between Currie Drive and Bedford Drive.

No cause of death has been released.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Class-action suit filed against B.C. firm over cribs

SAFETY Class-action lawsuits have been filed across Canada on behalf of consumers who bought drop-side cribs subject to a massive North American recall. The action, filed in six provinces, seeks a full refund for consumers who bought the cribs manufactured by Stork Craft Manufacturing of Richmond, B.C.

Tony Merchant, whose law firm is behind the suits, says about 1,000 consumers have signed on so far. The recall covers more than 2.1 million cribs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

HST B.C. NDP Leader Carole James says Liberals who won in May's election may be swayed to vote against their government on the HST. James says voters upset about the tax should pressure their Liberal MLAs.

GAMES The B.C. Civil Liberties Association demands VANOC remove a clause in its contract with Cultural Olympiad artists, which forbids them from making derogatory remarks about the 2010 Games or its organizers. METRO VANCOUVER

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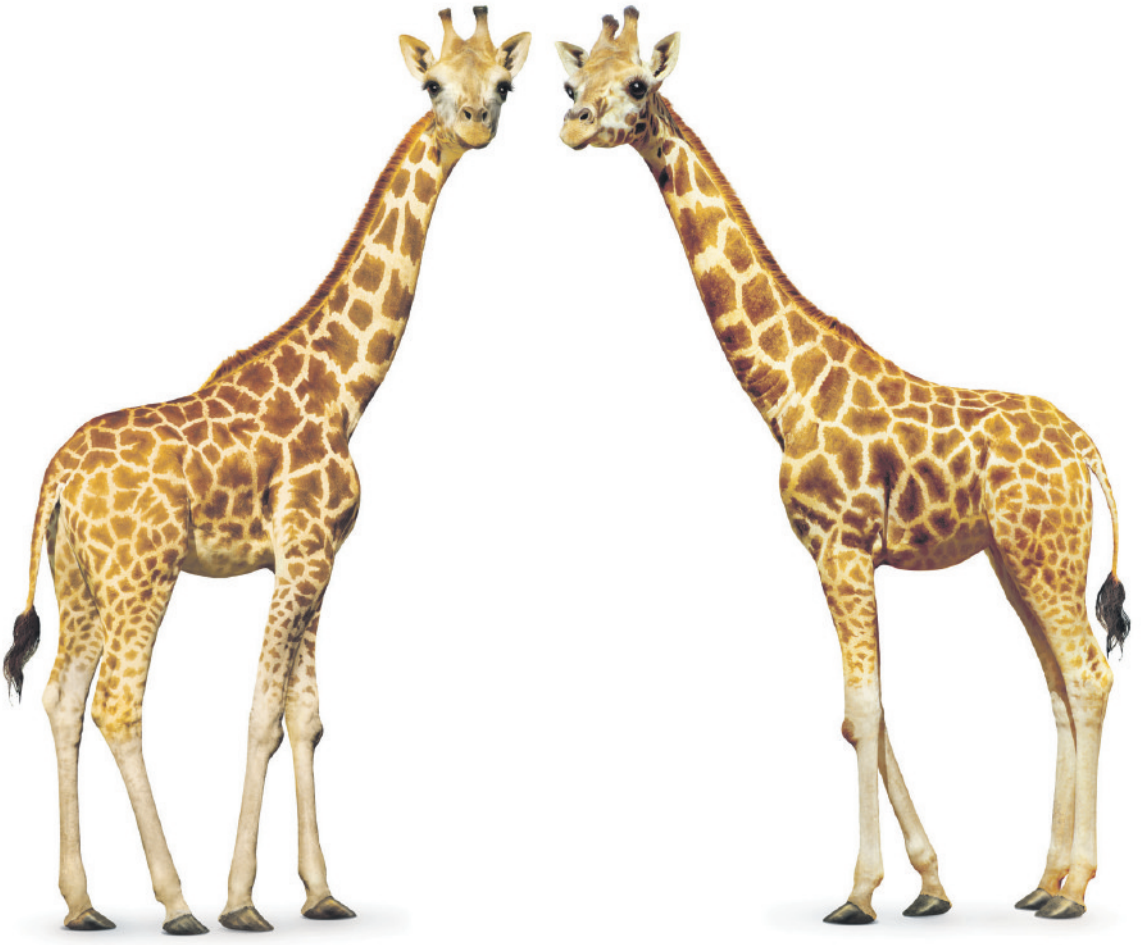

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P.E.I. looks to pass bill to allow tobacco lawsuits
A bill has been introduced in the Prince Edward Island legislature that would allow the province to sue tobacco companies for past health-care costs related to the product's use. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Family wants Douglas file released

The family of Canadian icon Tommy Douglas is urging the government to make public RCMP intelligence on the socialist firebrand and father of medicare, while an expert calls it ludicrous to claim any national security grounds to keep them secret. Actress Shirley Douglas, left, says she and her family believe the decades-old RCMP Security Service files should be turned over to a journalist who requested them four years ago. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RCMP looks into video tampering

TASER The RCMP public complaints commissioner will look into an allegation that officers may have tampered with video evidence in the 2003 death of a B.C. man who was jolted by a Mountie Taser.

Paul Kennedy, chairman of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP, has undertaken an investigation of all RCMP in-custody deaths in Canada from January 2001 to January 2009 where Tasers were used. Among them is the July 2003 death of Clayton Alvin Willey, who died en route to hospital after his July 2003 arrest in Prince George, B.C.

Kennedy will expand his review of Willey's death to include RCMP video of his arrest.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ottawa **Welcome home dad**

PAWEL DWUIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Julie, 3, hangs on to her dad Master Warrant Officer Sean Gardner upon his arrival from a 10-month tour in Afghanistan at Ottawa International Airport yesterday.

News in brief

COUNTERFEIT Police arrested alleged members of a large counterfeiting ring in Ontario and Quebec yesterday that produced high-quality, fake government ID cards.

SWINE FLU There have been 24 confirmed cases of a type of severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis in Canadians who have received an H1N1 flu shot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hillier calls Colvin's claims 'ludicrous'

Former general blasts torture allegations

Canada's former top soldier has blasted claims by diplomat Richard Colvin that the military handed over Afghan prisoners to face torture despite warnings, calling the allegation "ludicrous."

A bristling Rick Hillier, mixing indignance with folksy charm, told a special Commons committee yesterday that reports from Afghanistan in 2006 never mentioned that prisoners were at risk of torture.

But the dust from his testimony hadn't even settled before contradictions began to emerge.

Uncensored versions of Colvin's reports began circulating last night that said the International Committee of the Red Cross, the agency trusted by nations to observe prisoners of war, was named in e-mails to Ottawa as expressing "alarm" about conditions within Afghan prisons.

The references were particularly stark in one memo written by the diplomat on June 2, 2006.

An official who's seen Colvin's e-mailed reports conceded that the Red Cross was "really pissed off" for procedural reasons about Canada's tardy reporting whenever a prisoner was captured, but it was "more concerned about what was done to detainees after they were handed over."

The reports were widely distributed in both the defence and foreign affairs departments, and even apparently copied to the office of Peter MacKay, who was minister of foreign affairs in 2006.

Hillier denied seeing Colvin's reports at the time, but assured MPs that had they warned of torture, he would have been briefed. He said he recently reread the reports to reassure himself that he didn't blunder three years ago.

"We didn't base our work on things like reports written in May or June 2006, which said nothing about abuse, nothing about torture or anything else that would have caught my attention or indeed the attention of others," Hillier testified.

The testimony was backed up by retired general Michel Gauthier, former head of Canada's expeditionary forces, and Maj.-Gen. David Fraser, the Canadian commander on the ground in 2006.

Gauthier testified that reports in 2006 and early 2007 never even used the word torture, except in one isolated incidence.

And Fraser said he was never told about the alleged torture of prisoners: "If I had. I would have done something about it," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Victims

- Hoping to give future Canadian torture victims a chance to seek redress on local soil, Liberal MP Irwin Cotler will table a private member's bill today that would make it possible for them to sue their ex-captors in Canadian civil courts.

m.metronews.ca

Torture whistleblower Richard Colvin's colleagues in D.C. hail the former diplomat's bravery. Scan this barcode for the full story.

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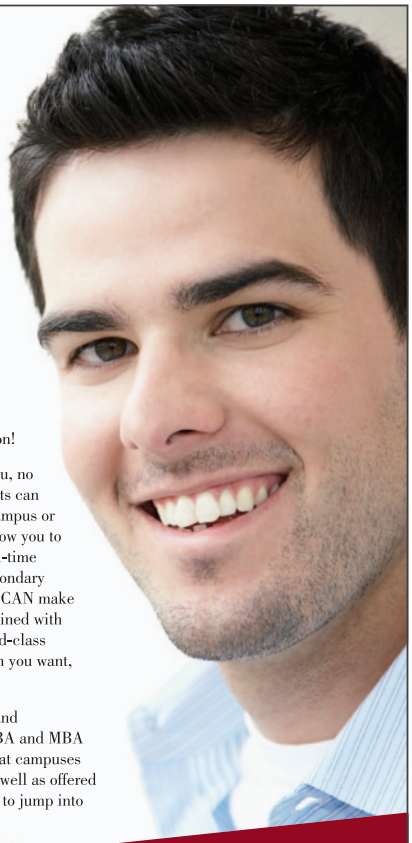

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2010 all about the Inuit

Next year has been declared the Year of the Inuit, CBC News Online reports. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Mary Simon said she wants to highlight the challenges Inuit face in Canada. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Torture spin backfired: Poll

Canadians aren't buying the Harper government's assertion that there's no credible evidence Afghan detainees were tortured, a new poll suggests.

And a pollster says the results suggest the government's strategy of attacking whistleblower Richard Colvin's credibility has backfired badly.

Harris-Decima chairman Allan Gregg said the government would've been better advised to take Colvin's allegations "under advisement" rather than vilifying him.

In the poll, 51 per cent of respondents said they believe the testimony Colvin gave last week.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Labour **Sid Ryan takes over powerful OFL**

MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Union leader Sid Ryan has been a polarizing figure in provincial politics — but as the new president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, he says he comes to Queen's Park in peace. Ryan, 57, who was acclaimed as president in Toronto yesterday, says he wants to work with the Liberals on building a "green" economy and repairing the province's gutted manufacturing sector.

Own your own home? It's costing you more

ECONOMY The cost of home ownership went up for the first time in 18 months, the Royal Bank reports.

And tight supply and strong demand are expected to keep prices high going forward in 2010.

Consumers planning to buy houses should take note that the current low interest rates aren't going to hold indefinitely, senior economist Robert Hogue said yesterday.

Costs increased for the first time since the spring of 2008 due to a slight rise in mortgage rates and higher property values, Hogue said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Putin's tiger OK
A rare Siberian tiger that Vladimir Putin fitted with a radio-tracking collar is alive and well, the Russian prime minister's spokesman said yesterday. Putin drew worldwide publicity in 2008 when he shot the five-year-old female with a tranquilizer gun. Visitors to his website could follow the animal's prowlings through Russia's Far East. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Deadly floods pound South America

Officials say flooding from heavy rains has killed 12 people in three South American nations and forced more than 20,000 to flee their homes. Most of the dead are in southern Brazil. Sustained stormy weather has saturated the region and caused the river between Uruguay and Argentina to overflow its banks. Government agencies report that 10,000 people have been evacuated in Brazil, along with 8,000 in northeastern Argentina and 4,000 in Uruguay. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charges on eve of Mumbai anniversary

Pakistan charged seven men in last year's Mumbai attacks yesterday, its first indictment in a case being monitored by India and the United States to see if Islamabad makes good on promises to bring those responsible to justice.

Despite a crackdown in the months following the attacks, analysts say Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistani militant group blamed for the three-day assault on the financial centre that killed 166 people, remains active and largely untouched by Pakistani authorities.

The Mumbai attacks halted a slow-moving peace process between Pakistan and India — which have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain in 1947 — aimed at resolving their core dispute over Kashmir, which they both claim. India says Pakistan must crack down on militants before talks can resume.

The charges were announced in a closed door court located inside a high-security prison near the capital Islamabad, on the eve of the first anniversary of the attacks. A judge adjourned proceedings until Dec. 5, when prosecutors will present their opening arguments.

Late yesterday, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was in Washington, said the planners of the attacks are still free in Pakistan and issued a stern warning to punish the masterminds.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Surviving gunman

- India is currently trying the lone surviving gunman, Ajmal Kasab, who also faces the death penalty.

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ScanLife
Police investigating Philippine election convoy massacre. Scan this barcode for the full story.
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

France does some soul-searching

PARIS What does it mean to be French?

That's the thorny question the government is putting to its people in what's being billed as a "Great Debate" — set against a backdrop of smouldering unrest in immigrant-heavy suburbs, a movement to ban full Muslim veils, and questions over whether France's essential identity is vanishing in a complex world. The question may seem straightforward but it is laden with paradox. France is a country that has one of the highest proportions of immigrants in Europe and endures recurrent tensions over religion — yet champions the notion of a consensual "Frenchness," anchored in secularism.

> **"We're in a real denial of reality. Our world is cracking silently."**
> Jean-Pierre Door

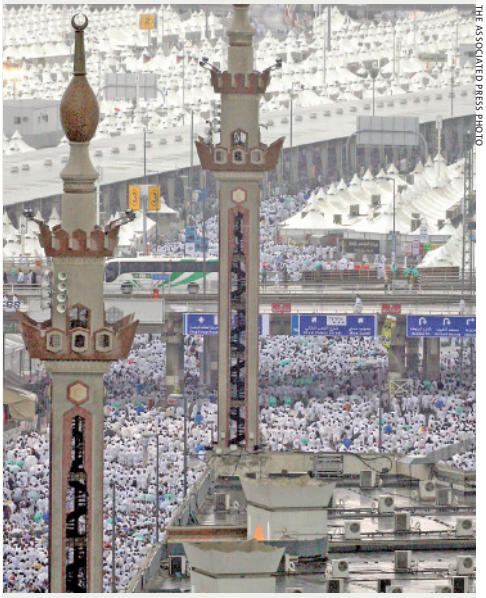
"We're in a real denial of reality. Our world is cracking silently," said Jean-Pierre Door, a mayor who spoke yesterday at the first debate hosted at the Immigration Ministry. He said the dialogue is breaking long-held taboos.

This government-ordered soul-searching over the French identity is an effort to clarify and reaffirm the nation's values, which President Nicolas Sarkozy says have been "forgotten and sometimes denied."

All French citizens are in principle invited to participate in the series of meetings organized by the government across the country, lasting through Jan. 31.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saudi Arabia **Journey to Mecca**



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Muslim pilgrims attend the hajj walk on flooded streets during heavy rains near Mecca, Saudi Arabia yesterday. The heaviest rainstorms to hit Islam's annual hajj in years soaked pilgrims and flooded the road into Mecca and Jiddah, snarling traffic as millions headed for the holy sites.

News in brief

MIDDLE EAST Israel yesterday proposed a 10-month halt to new construction in West Bank settlements as a step toward restarting Mideast peace negotiations. Washington welcomed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's offer, but the Palestinians swiftly rejected it because it did not include a building freeze in Jewish neighbourhoods in east Jerusalem, the mainly Arab sector of the city that they want as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

WASHINGTON Crashing a state dinner at the White House apparently takes a security breakdown as well as some kind of nerve. The Secret Service determined that a Virginia couple managed to slip into Tuesday's state dinner at the White House even though they were not on the guest list. The party crashers went through the same security screening as the 300-plus invitees honouring Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Network supports piracy: UN report

CONGO One of Africa's most brutal rebel movements relies on a vast, international network of supporters in at least 25 countries, a UN report said. The findings show that the network of people help rebels in Congo buy arms and transfer money. The conclusions are a scathing indictment of how little the international community has done to cut off logistical support to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, an ethnic Hutu militia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nurse charged in molestations

ATLANTA A nurse anesthetist has been charged with molesting and sodomizing anesthetized patients in dental and medical offices, and police say the videotaped abuses could involve 100 or more victims.

Paul Patrick Serdula, 47, who worked in dental and medical offices across Atlanta, was arrested Monday on child molestation and sodomy charges.

The arrest came after authorities found several videos showing him fondling and groping people who were under anesthesia at various offices, said Cobb County police officer Joe Hernandez. Authorities reviewing the videos to find more victims say the assaults could go back years and involve residents of other states who were treated by Serdula. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. changes mind on landmine policy

The Obama administration is backtracking on an announcement that it had reviewed its policy allowing military use of land mines and decided to leave it in place. On Tuesday, U.S. State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said the administration had completed a review and decided not sign a treaty banning land mines. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Authenticity of texts unclear

An activist group has begun posting 573,000 pager messages purportedly sent on Sept. 11, 2001, from "Second World Trade Center tower collapses" to "I'm ok&love you..xoxoxoxoxoxoxoxox."

The group, Wikileaks, says some of the messages were sent by federal and local officials, but most appear to be from regular people, including frantic New Yorkers trying to reach loved ones in and around the World Trade Center.

Wikileaks was posting the messages for most of the day yesterday and expected to finish early Thursday. The messages range from "DO NOT GET ON THE PATH TRAIN...THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IS ON FIRE" to "President has been rerouted wont be returning to washington but not sure where he will go."

Wikileaks says its goal is to promote transparency by putting leaked documents online. Its repository includes manuals, lawsuits and numerous government documents.

New York's police and fire departments said they could not confirm that any of the messages were actual department communications.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the U.S. Secret Service and FEMA declined to comment on the messages.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

MOROCCO A Swiss adventurer trying to soar from Morocco to Spain on jet-powered wings has ditched safely into the Atlantic after hitting turbulence and thick clouds. The bad weather thwarted Yves Rossy's bid yesterday to become the first person to achieve such an intercontinental crossing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

El Salvador **Marching against violence**

LUIS ROMERO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women in body paint march in protest of violence against women in the El Salvadoran capital of San Salvador yesterday. Hundreds of people marched in honour of International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women.

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Comment

The workplace romance ... at home

Relating

I dropped in on an old friend who, since I'd last seen him, has not only gone into business for himself, but is working with his wife. Couples who can manage to do this sort of thing fascinate me.

So I asked him, "How is she as a co-worker?"

"She's great," he replied. What else is he going to say?

Working with someone with whom you're already entangled is the reverse of the workplace romance as we usually know it. Instead of watching a lover emerge from a stranger, you watch a stranger of sorts, a professional self, emerge from your lover.

That's exciting, sure, and many couples' complaints won't be yours anymore. You'll certainly see enough of each other, be more involved in each other's lives, but we should always be careful of what we wish for.

Is your attachment strong enough to survive a highly personal office brand of politics? What happens to your relationship — or your business — when one or the other fails? The exit interview could be remarkably unpleasant. How do you make your partnership more Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, less Ike and Tina Turner?

Times like these, in which jobs evaporate and self-employment beckons, tempt more couples to experiment with working together. It's been tried often enough that there are countless how-to articles, written by successful power couples, usually with lists of rules.

Alas, since these are relationships after all, everybody's rules are different, and often contradictory. "What happens at work stays at work," advises one guru. "What happens at home stays at home."

Another warns, "Don't separate work from the rest of your life ... The idea that 'work time' and 'time off' are separate is a false distinction."

Thanks for clearing that up, gurus.

I've never tried this particular setup myself (I prefer to be the one listening to the complaints about work than the subject of those complaints) but I've seen many couples do it with style. Unsurprisingly, they tend to be married. Any marriage, after all, is already a de facto small business.

My friend and his wife work mostly from home, but he's also got an office, so clients can be entertained somewhere other than the kitchen with the kids.

She's also looking for work in her own field, so this team-up isn't likely to last forever. The relationship, from all indications, will.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.

Views

Gender studies support crucial lessons

FourthWave

As many women do in university, I took a few women's studies classes. I remember in one mostly female class the teacher asked who was feminist; my hand was among a few that went up. But in class discussions, my classmates' thoughts on gender roles or reproductive rights made it clear that's exactly what they are.

It's an apt example of how necessary gender studies are; that young adults can dismiss feminism as radical yet recognize the cornerstones of the movement is evidence of this.

Fortunately, two initiatives are underway to change that.

Ontario's education ministry announced earlier this month that a gender studies class would be offered beginning in September 2011 — a crucial lesson for young men and women just starting to learn how to relate to one other.

Shameless Magazine, a Canadian feminist magazine, has launched free weekend workshops on journalism for teen girls called Shameless Wire. By teaching them the fundamentals of the trade, Shameless hopes to introduce more voices to tell the story of our diverse society.

As it is, degrees and unpaid internships are practically prerogatives to become a journalist, limiting the field to those who can pay their way in. Women comprise the majority of the incoming talent pool (two in three journalism students are women, according to a 2003 U.S. study), but men hold 65 per cent of supervising positions at newspapers, a 2006 study says.

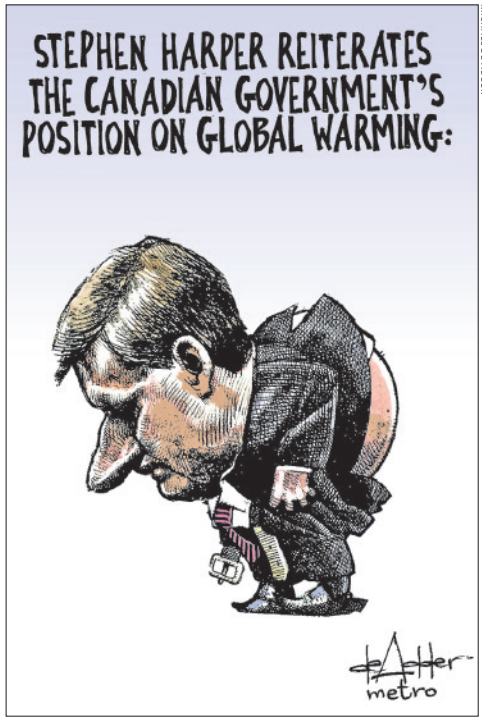
Perhaps the simplest, most important reason is this: "Very few other industries would consider this kind of model acceptable," said Allison Martell, one of two women who created Shameless Wire. "It's not because I think we need to be a token, I just think we're going to have the best workforce if we make sure it's open to everyone."

The lesson holds true outside the newsroom, too. What we absorb in our daily lives shapes our identities. As Emily Gould wrote on moreintelligentlife.com: "Women have not yet come so far that we can shrug off worries about being misrepresented."

The messages that bombard us daily can be relentless: Pop culture is littered with stereotypes and unrealistic standards: Ugly Betys and Top Model Tyras, Biggest Losers and flabby runners-up, and men and boys.

My hope is these two programs will offer a lesson not to just young adults, but to all of us: There is nuance in the world, and by acknowledging it, we're better for it.

Canice Leung is a former editor of Ryerson University feminist magazine McClung's, copy editor at Metro, ardent feminist and loudmouth.



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Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

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women against violence against women

Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre (WAVAW) is seeking a Victim Service Worker who is committed to a Feminist Anti-Oppression approach to her work. Preference will be given to Aboriginal women and women of colour who also speak additional languages representative of the population of Vancouver. This is a permanent P/T position with full benefits.

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Two European firms split Nortel's GSM business units
LM Ericsson and Austrian company Kapsch CarrierCom have been selected to jointly buy the GSM wireless technology business auctioned off by Nortel Networks Corp. THE CANADIAN PRESS

13

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Loonie shines in Russia

The Canadian dollar shot closer to parity with the U.S. dollar yesterday after the Russian central bank said it is preparing to invest in the loonie and diversify away from the American greenback.

The Russian bank said it plans to invest some of its foreign exchange reserves in Canada's currency to diversify its portfolio and reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar.

The Canadian dollar rose to its highest level in a week, closing at 95.65 cents US, up 1.13 cents from Tuesday's close. The loonie is a commodity currency, meaning it is linked to the performance of commodities, which have been on a strong uptrend in the past months.

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Meanwhile, the U.S. dollar slid to a 15-month low against the euro and to its weakest level against the yen since January.

A Canadian market that has fared better than many during the recession, and a sluggish U.S. economy, make Canada an ideal investment for banks looking to diversify their investments away from U.S. dollar reserves, the staple reserve currency in most countries, said Steven Butler, director of foreign exchange at Scotia Capital.

Russia is not the first central bank to diversify into the Canadian dollar — there has also been interest in Latin America and Asia, he added.

"The Canadian economy has weathered the storm much better than a lot of other countries and Canada seems like a pretty logical place to diversify, especially the way the commodities have been climbing higher and the way the Canadian dollar has weathered the storm." The size of investment in the loonie has not been confirmed.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business buzz 'Tis the season

AHN YOUNG-JOON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

South Korean children wearing Santa Claus outfits wait yesterday to participate in a special event to promote business at the Time Square in Seoul, South Korea. South Korean companies are taking advantage of Christmas to promote their business amid weak sales and economic slowdown.

Business in brief

PROFIT Canadian corporations earned $54.1 billion in operating profits in the third quarter, up 7.9 per cent from the previous quarter after three straight quarterly declines. Overall gains were widespread, as 18 of 22 industries reported higher profits in Q3.

COURT Newsprint giant AbitibiBowater's cost savings efforts took a step forward yesterday after two Quebec judges endorsed changes that will save the insolvent company nearly $5 million a year. They include the sale of a pulp and paper mill in Quebec.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

99% in favour of EnCana split

EnCana Corp.'s plans to split itself into two separate companies received such overwhelming support from shareholders yesterday even the company's chief executive was caught a bit off guard.

"It's kind of unheard of in any transaction."
Randy Eresman

Randy Eresman, who is to head up the unconventional natural gas-focused company that will emerge from the split, told reporters he knew major shareholders supported the transaction.

What he didn't expect was a near-unanimous vote — at least 99 per cent — in favour of the split at a special shareholder meeting in Calgary yesterday.

"It's kind of unheard of in any transaction," Eresman said in a news conference.

EnCana first announced its split plans in May 2008, but in the depths of the recession decided to put the transaction on hold.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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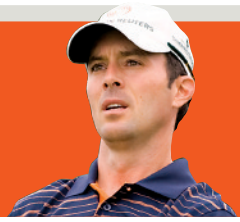
Skater banned from Olympics after alleged theft of car

Russian figure skater Andrei Lutai will miss the Winter Olympics after receiving a one-year ban for allegedly stealing a car in the United States and driving it while drunk. Russian Figure Skating Federation chief Valentin Piseyev said Lutai's suspension is for "violations of the training regime and ethical norms." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports



Weir to be enshrined

Mike Weir's career is about to come full circle. The lefty from Bright's Grove, Ont., will return to his hometown Saturday to be inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame during a reception at Huron Oaks, the golf course where he honed his game as a kid. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Schedule only gets tougher

The Canucks are getting healthy just in time for a critical portion of games

Winger Pavol Demitra is the only Vancouver Canucks player remaining on the injury list and he's swimming to rehabilitate a damaged shoulder.

As for his teammates, it's time to stop treading water as they enter a critical portion of their schedule, playing 18 games in 36 nights.

"We all know we have a tough schedule around the Olympics and we've got to realize it's going to get a lot tougher," said winger Daniel Sedin who returned Sunday after missing 18 games with a broken foot.

The Canucks have an eight-game road trip before the Winter Games and play six more away from GM Place when they're over.

"We need to play well in those games because we could be in big trouble later on," forward Steve Bernier said of a schedule with three more home games in November and eight in December.

Sedin, who led Vancouver with 31 goals last season but has none in five games this year, expects a healthy lineup will mean familiar line combinations and more chemistry on the ice. "When you're playing more consistently, you're going to get better efforts," Sedin said after yesterday's practice in preparation for tonight's game against the visiting Los Angeles Kings.

"If you play once a week it's going to be tougher for sure. It shouldn't be different when you've had a three or four-day break, but it always seems like it's tough to get going."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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DOUG PENSINGER/GETTY IMAGES

Vancouver forward Daniel Sedin returned Sunday after missing 18 games with a broken foot.

Sports in brief

SOCCER Five clubs in Albania, Latvia, Slovenia and Hungary were named as suspects in European football's biggest match-fixing investigation, UEFA said yesterday. The European football body identified the clubs as KF Tirana, FC Dinaburg, KS Vilaznia, NK IB Ljubljana and Honved and said they allegedly fixed seven qualifying round games in the Champions League and Europa League between July 16 and Aug. 6.

TENNIS Rafael Nadal fell out of contention for a spot in the semifinals at the ATP World Tour Finals with a second straight defeat, losing 6-1, 7-6 (4) yesterday against Nikolay Davydenko.

NFL Two-time Super Bowl winner Mike Shanahan has met with the Buffalo Bills to discuss their head coaching vacancy, according to a published report.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Iverson to retire?
Allen Iverson is set to retire from the NBA, according to an online report from commentator Stephen A. Smith, published yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Riders fan now an Al

GREY CUP PREVIEW

Roughriders vs Alouettes

It will be all business for Scott Flory when he lines up in the Grey Cup game against the team he rooted for as a child.

The all-star guard for the Montreal Alouettes was born and raised in Regina, and was technically a Roughrider for a short spell in 2004 although he never wore the green and white.

And now the 32-year-old will be banging helmets with Roughrider defensive linemen when the teams meet in the Grey Cup game for the first time on Sunday at McMahon Stadium (TSN, 3:30 p.m.).

"How could you not be growing up in Regina?" Flory said yesterday of growing up a Riders fan. "That's all I knew.

"But I'm an Alouette and I love it. I wear that little lark on my chest proudly."

Green-clad fans from neighbouring Saskatchewan are expected to invade Calgary to see their team vie for a second Grey Cup in the last three years. With the passion Saskatchewan has for its team, Flory knows they'll be noisy.

"It's like the Habs mentality in Regina, that's how I'd describe it to Montreal," he said. "The Habs are everything to Montreal, right?

"We won on Sunday, but they trade Guillaume Latendresse and it's front page of the sports section. We understand that. And that's the culture in Regina."

Award show

- Flory, a six-time CFL all-star, will be up for a second straight Outstanding Lineman nod at the league awards ceremonies tonight.

And what abuse can he expect if the Alouettes beat the Riders?

"I live permanently in Montreal now so it's not an issue," he said.

Flory was a Roughrider briefly in 2004, when he signed with them as a free agent in the off-season, but had a change of heart and was traded back to Montreal before the start of training camp.

"That's something that is in the past," was all he'd say about it. "I love the team I'm on now and I wouldn't change it for the world. THE CANADIAN PRESS

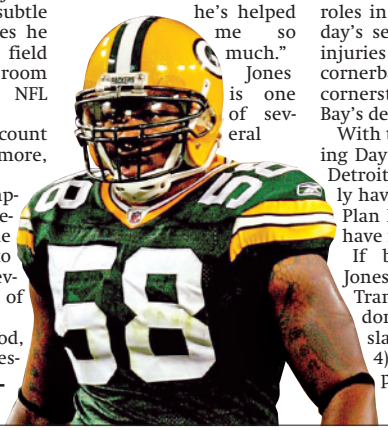
Packers look to backup players

NFL Aaron Kampman has been there for Green Bay Packers rookie Brad Jones all year, sharing the subtle tricks and techniques he has learned on the field and in the film room through seven-plus NFL seasons.

The Packers can't count on Kampman anymore, but Jones still will.

Jones credits Kampman for the improvement he has made since coming to Green Bay as a seventh-round pick out of Colorado.

"Aaron's so good, man," Jones said Tuesday. "He's really the description of a 'vet,' a veteran. He knows so much, he's helped me so much."



Brad Jones

Jones is one of several lesser-known Packers players, who will have to take on more significant roles in the wake of Sunday's season-ending knee injuries to Kampman and cornerback Al Harris, two cornerstones of Green Bay's defence.

With today's Thanksgiving Day game looming in Detroit, the Packers barely have time to draw up Plan B — and certainly have no time to sulk.

If backups such as Jones and cornerback Tramon Williams don't take up the slack, the Packers (6-4) might miss the playoffs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Milan, Marseille battle to qualify

SOCCER Real Madrid, AC Milan and Marseille remain locked in a battle to advance from the same group after not a single team clinched qualification in the Champions League yesterday.

Madrid tops Group C with 10 points after Gonzalo Higuain scored in a 1-0 win over FC Zurich.

Milan drew 1-1 with Marseille to be next with eight points, one more than the French club.

If Marseille beats Madrid by a two-goal margin Dec. 8, the Spaniards will still qualify even if Milan defeats last-place Zurich. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Boston 2 Minnesota 1 (SO)
Nashville 4 Colorado 3 (OT)
N.Y. Rangers 2 Florida 1 (SO)
Philadelphia 2 N.Y. Islanders 1
St. Louis 4 Dallas 3 (SO)
Washington 2 Buffalo 0
Carolina at Anaheim
Chicago at San Jose

TODAY'S GAMES
Columbus at Ottawa
Los Angeles at VANCOUVER

FRIDAY GAMES
New Jersey at Boston
Buffalo at Philadelphia
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Islanders
Colorado at Minnesota
Chicago at Anaheim
Atlanta at Carolina
N.Y. Rangers at Tampa Bay
Toronto at Florida
Calgary at Detroit
St. Louis at Nashville
San Jose at Edmonton
Dallas at Phoenix

NBA

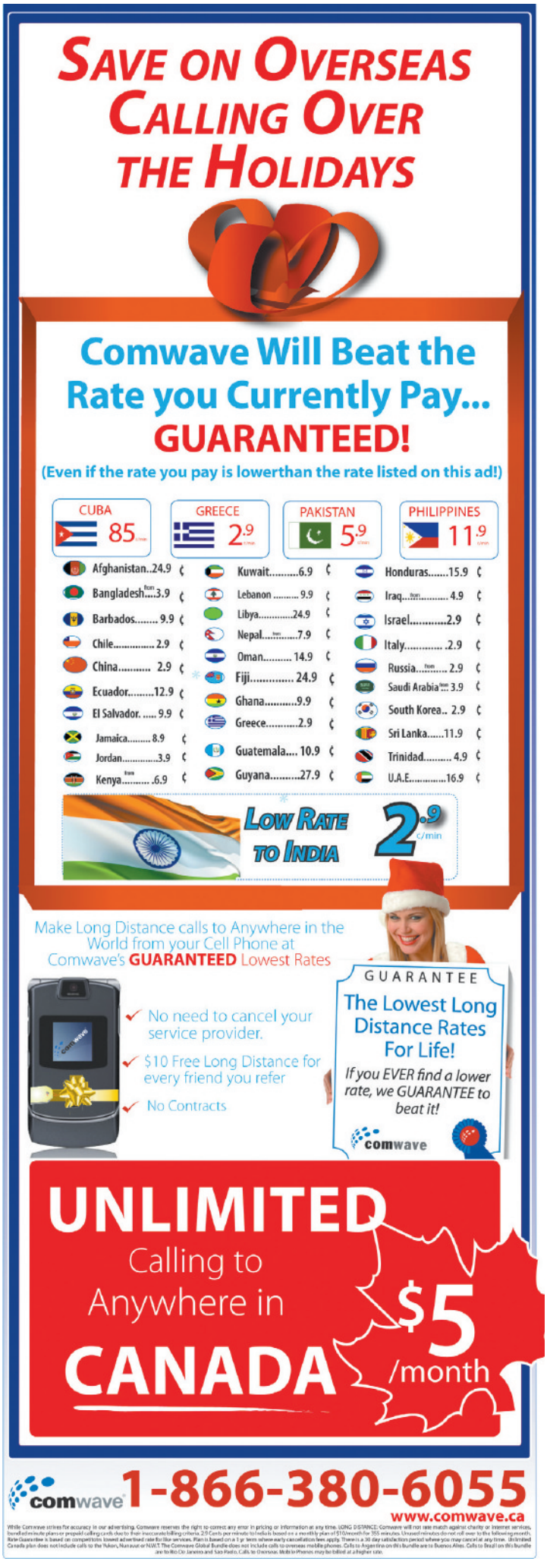
YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Charlotte 116 Toronto 81
Boston 113 Philadelphia 110
Cleveland 98 Detroit 88
Dallas 130 Houston 99
Denver 124 Minnesota 111
Indiana 86 L.A. Clippers 73
Miami 99 Orlando 98
New Orleans 102 Milwaukee 99 (OT)
San Antonio 118 Golden State 104
Memphis at Phoenix
New York at Sacramento
New Jersey at Portland

TODAY'S GAMES
Orlando at Atlanta
Chicago at Utah

NFL

TODAY'S GAMES
Green Bay at Detroit
Oakland at Dallas
N.Y. Giants at Denver

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Miami at Buffalo
Carolina at N.Y. Jets
Seattle at St. Louis
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Indianapolis at Houston
Cleveland at Cincinnati
Washington at Philadelphia
Kansas City at San Diego
Jacksonville at San Francisco
Arizona at Tennessee
Chicago at Minnesota
Pittsburgh at Baltimore



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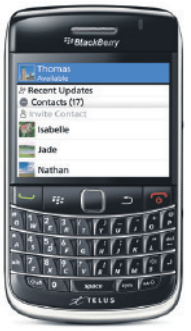

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Treat yourself!
If you're out shopping and need a pick-me-up, why not go for one of these holiday lattes from Starbucks? Flavours include Peppermint Mocha, Gingerbread, and Caramel Brulée. Five cents US from the sale of every latte will be donated to RED on Dec. 1. METRO NEWS SERVICES

HOLIDAY

Shopping Guide

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Shoot to thrill with cameras

From DSLRs to camcorders, there's something for every photographer on your list

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

A picture truly is worth a thousand words so snap away this holiday season with some of Metro's best picks for photographic fun:

Samsung ST550 dual-screen camera
$399.99

If you love hanging out with friends but hate having all those self-portrait group shots turn out skewed or with people cut out, the ST550 camera is for you. As the world's first dual-LCD camera, the ST550 places a second 1.5-inch LCD screen on the front, lens-forward part of the camera to let you see exactly how you're framing your self-portrait. You'll also notice there are no buttons on the back of the camera, which is taken up entirely by a huge 3.5-inch touch screen that lets you take and edit your photos using just your finger. With 12.2 megapixels, image stabilization and smart face recognition to boot, this is one cool camera.

Nikon D3000 DSLR w/ 18-15mm VR lens
$639.95

A killer rig for the enthusiastic amateur photographer, Nikon's D3000 is the premiere entry-level Digital SLR camera on the market. Don't let the entry-level tag fool you though, there is nothing stripped down or feature-famished about this model. With an 11-pt autofocus, large DX format CCD sensor, three-inch LCD monitor and coming with versatile 18-55mm VR lens (VR stands for Vibration Reduction, Nikon's version of image stabilization) this is way more camera than you should be getting for the money. For real DSLR first-timers, the camera sports a powerful guide mode to help teach you not only all the ins and outs of the camera, but the most crucial principles of DSLR photography as well.

Olympus Stylus Tough-6000
$329

Built to survive situations that would see other cameras either shatter into shards or shut down for good, the 10-megapixel Tough-6000 is touted by Olympus as being able to survive a five-foot drop, being submerged 10 feet underwater, sat upon or even frozen to -10 C. The body has a built-in "tap control" whereby things like flash mode or picture playback can be accessed simply by tapping the sides or back of the camera — ideal for when you're wearing gloves on the winter slopes or diving to snap shots of dolphins. If there ever was a truly child-proof camera that not even your delightful nephew could ruin with his "eccentric" ways of playing with toys, this is it.

Canon 7D DSLR camera
$2,099.99

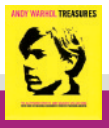
Canon's newest DSLR addition is the real deal — a professional level camera at a semi-professional price that really understands what makes photography fun. The 7D takes Canon's excellent CMOS sensor to new heights with 18-megapixels attached to two Digic 4 image processors, which enable the rig to take photos at 8 fps in continuous shooting mode with ISO ratings up to 12,800 for superior low-light photo taking. Canon consulted with more than 5,000 professional photographers worldwide to find out exactly what they wanted from a camera and the result is a swath of revolutionary features like an intelligent light metering system, a bright viewfinder with 100 per cent coverage, full HD 1080p video shooting, a built-in transmitter for external flashes and even a dual-axis electronic level built into the viewfinder so you'll never have to take skewed shots that look like the Titanic is constantly sinking. This camera might even slay dragons if you find the right button.

Kodak Zi8 pocket video camera
$199.95

Small but feature-packed, the Kodak Zi8 is convenient and fun to use. This compact but powerful little video camera is great for taking quick vids on-the-fly for your Youtube or Facebook postings. Despite its smaller size and price, the camera packs in full 1080p HD video capabilities, image stabilization, face detection and comes with HDMI and AV cables included. Easy to carry and use, the Zi8 is perfect for budding pocket-directors.

Flip Video MinoHD camcorder
$279.99

If cuteness could transform into a camera, the MinoHD might just be the form it would take. While the spry little camera can take up to 60 minutes of high-definition video and features an internal rechargeable battery, it also has plenty of style: Yours. The MinoHD has a fully customizable exterior, from cool prints to interesting patterns to your own photos or images, making sure every Mino is unique. The personalization is fully included in the price and the camera weighs just over three ounces.



For the art lover
Andy Warhol Treasures: The Illustrated Story of Andy Warhol's Life and Works, $39.95 at Indigo and Chapters stores, or online at chapters.indigo.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Gifts for the gamer in your life

KAREN FALCON
for Metro Canada

This season is stuffed full of gaming goodness and Metro has made it wicked-easy for you by narrowing the choices down to the best of the holiday offerings (all under $60). Just take this handy paper to the store and point to what you need. Clever, right?

Borderlands

Platform: PS3, Xbox 360
Rated: M

There's never been anything quite like it. It's a shooter and it's an RPG. I'm just gonna put this out there and say I don't think I played a better game this year. Did I mention it's got guns? A mind-boggling amount of inspiring guns? And vending machines where you can use your XP to buy health, shields, ammo, and more guns?

The single-player is fantastic but as you roam around the Borderlands searching for loot, think about convincing your friends to get this game too — it's uber-good alone but even better with four of you running and gunning, leveling up your distinct characters, and making giant Spider Ants go splat.

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2

Platform: PS3, PC, Xbox 360
Rated: M

You need to secure Burger Town and it's not going to be easy. The campaign is relentlessly frantic, short, and super-freakin'-hard on Veteran, but don't worry because the single-player story isn't where it's at. The online play that delivers all kinds of great new stuff and the new two-player co-op Special Ops missions are where it's at. With ground-wrecking graphics, killstreaks that unlock nukes, and lasting appeal that will take you to 2014, I wonder if this is why COD MW2 is busting all kinds of video game records — I'll bet it is.

Forza Motorsport 3

Platform: Xbox 360
Rated: E

I'm no driver. I'm just a chick who games a lot and the beauty of this game is that even if you're like me and have no clue what a gas pedal looks like, you can still win races and feel like a rock star. But that's only one of the beauties. There are lots! Like the endless decals and paint jobs you can create. Like racing around the world with people from around the world. Like turning off the racing line, the ABS, and the traction control, then stuffing your beautiful creation right into the corner on that hairpin turn.

Whatever your capacity for racing games, Forza 3 rocks. And another beauty — pretty much every car is for sale from the very beginning so you don't have to wait to play.

A scene from Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time.

Left 4 Dead 2

Platform: Xbox 360, PC
Rated: M

The undead stumble around faster than you think the undead would, the Director (AI) is brilliant, and the game tailors itself to the player's abilities. So what's better than that, you ask? Well, for starters, there are five immediately accessible campaigns, an insanely fun multiplayer mode called Scavenge, a grenade launcher that teaches you the meaning of "friendly fire," and a frying pan. That's right — and it makes the most satisfying sound when it connects with zombie brains. Frying pans aren't just for eggs anymore — they're for hordes of swarming zombies.

Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time

Platform: PS3
Rated: E

Your favourite Lombax is at it again and this time he's packin' a customizable super-cool, uber-inventive arsenal.

With a mind-boggling amount of stuff to upgrade, fun puzzles, and fantastic Clank sections, this last instalment of the Future series isn't one fans or newcomers should miss.

It's a perfect Ratchet game with stupendous guns, tonnes of nuts and bolts flying all over your screen, a brilliant control scheme, and a magnificent pair of hoverboots. Oh, and a Chimp-o-Matic — because everybody needs a gun that turns enemies into monkeys!

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Platform: PS3
Rated: T

I've decided that chuckin' propane tanks at enemies and then shooting 'em to make big fat destructive fireballs is one of the best things to do in videogame land.

Kids, do not try this at home unless you're playing your PS3 and playing one of the best-looking and most satisfying, story-driven single-player games of all time.

It's Nathan Drake meets Lara Croft meets Indiana Jones in Uncharted 2.

Trust me. I know things.

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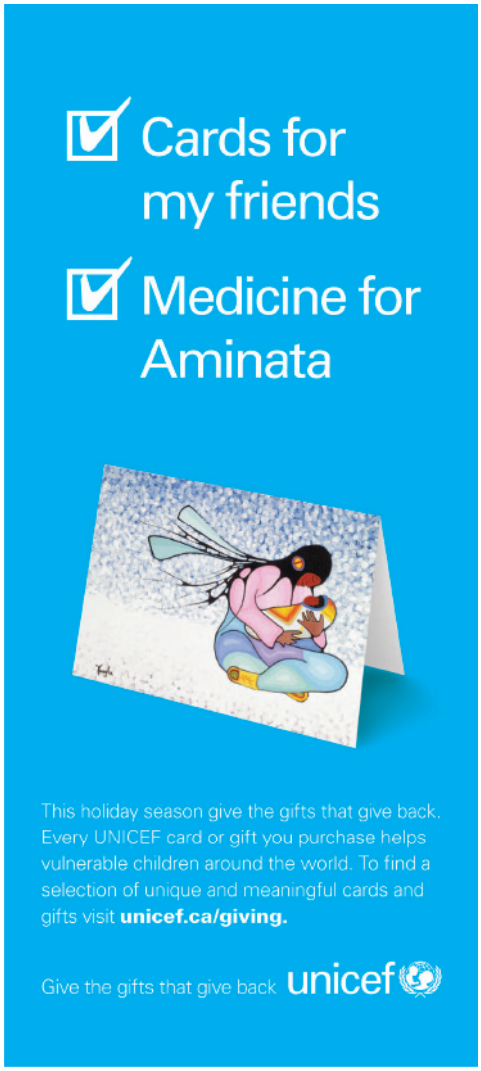
Holiday Shopping Guide

More books for your shopping list

- For Metro's book picks for children between the ages of eight and 12, please turn to page 22.



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Gifts for the book-lover on your shopping list

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

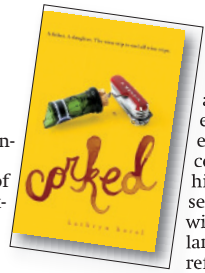
A funny French wine tour memoir from a new Canadian writer and the dark sophomore novel by an Australian singer are among Metro's literary must-haves for this holiday season.

Whether you're trekking old-fashioned to the bookstore or stuffing stockings with a click, consider these top publishing picks of 2009.

Corked

Author: Kathryn Borel Jr.
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons
Price: $29.95 (hardcover)

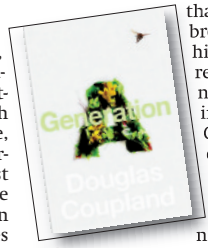
The road to hell is paved with grapevines in this comic breakout memoir by Toronto radio producer and writer Kathryn Borel Jr. Despite growing up with regular tasting lessons from her wine connoisseur father Philippe, Kathryn's vintage vocabulary hasn't quite fermented. Aiming to connect with often-headstrong Philippe, she initiates a father-daughter wine quest through France. But the well-intentioned trip soon turns sour as she struggles to reconcile her father's outrageous behaviour with her own strenuous past. Written in Borel's sharp-witted, self-assured voice, Corked marks the introduction of an expressive, honest writer whose rich, vivacious voyage proves to be compassionate as it is, itself, corked.



Generation A

Author: Douglas Coupland
Publisher: Random House Canada
Price: $32.95 (hardcover)

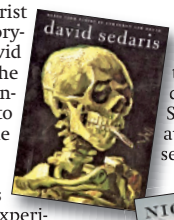
Eighteen years after the release of his breakout novel Generation X, Vancouver-based Douglas Coupland follows the narrative style and theme that brought him to recognition in Generation A. In the near future, bees have all gone extinct. But when five strangers from Canada, the United States, France, New Zealand and Sri Lanka are each stung, they become embroiled in mass media attention, studies and eventual capture by a scientist determined to discover their connection in his own way. Blending sentiments of optimism with catastrophe, Coupland continues his astute reflection on popular culture and technology, always coloured by his distinctive brand of humour.



When You Are Engulfed in Flames

Author: David Sedaris
Publisher: Little, Brown & Co.
Price: $17.99 (paperback)

In this sixth collection of personal essays by matter-of-fact American humorist and storyteller David Sedaris, the writer continues to mine the seemingly mundane, turning his daily experiences into wonderfully wry accounts of personal discovery. In more than 22 short accounts, Sedaris probes his boyfriend Hugh's quick-paced walk, sharing a boarding house with some unexpectedly less-than-refined roommates, and how it took a trip halfway around the world for him to quit smoking cigarettes. Equal parts absurd and upstanding, When You Are Engulfed In Flames propels Sedaris' frank storytelling prowess. Fans of Sedaris' contributions to NPR radio show This American Life will enjoy the author-narrated audiobook edition, now available in stores and online.



The Death of Bunny Munro

Author: Nick Cave
Publisher: HarperCollins Canada
Price: $29.99 (hardcover)

Don't let the ironically adorable fluffy bunny costume on this book's cover fool you. The Death of Bunny Munro fits nicely in the dark thematic vein established by Australian bands The Birthday Party and The Bad Seeds, both fronted by its author Nick Cave. Bunny's sex addiction finds him aiming to get into more than the just the wallets of his prospective customers.

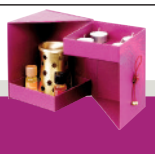
Shop online to avoid stress of long lines, crowds

When it comes to holiday shopping, research has shown the majority of Canadians dislike the crowds and long lines associated with this extremely busy shopping period.

Consumers looking for an alternative should consider shopping online.

- **Look for alternate shipping options for U.S. merchants.** If you can't find the item you're looking for locally, consider purchasing it from a U.S. retailer and using a packaging forwarding service like MyUS.com. The service allows the merchant to ship to a U.S. address and arranges for the packages to be shipped to you.
- **Take advantage of comparison shopping.** There's no need to run from store to store, so it's easy to compare selection and pricing between different retailer. NEWS CANADA

Hostess gift
The Festive Stars Oil Burner, $20, creates an ambient glow. Fragrance oils include Mulled Berries, Mandarin Giner and Vanilla Spice. Available at the Body Shop, bodyshop.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Holiday Shopping Guide

His favourite things...

Robert Talbot ties, $150 each, at Harry Rosen. For more, go to harryrosen.com.

One Hundred Years of Menswear by Cally Blackman, $50, at Indigo and Chapters stores. For more, go to chapters.indigo.ca.

Plaid fedora, $16.99, at Winners. For more, go to winners.ca or call 1-877-946-6877.

Distinction Boxed Shirt and Tie Set, $79.99, at Sears. For more, go to sears.ca.

THE MERCURY
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For a list of Canadian retailers, visit marceckotime.ca or call 1-800-263-0981.

Cashmere-Blend Argyle Sweater, $39.99, at Winners. For more, go to winners.ca or call 1-877-946-6877.

Signature cufflinks, $105, at Swarovski. For more, go to swarovski.com.

Alan Paine cashmere sweater, $498, at Harry Rosen. For more, go to harryrosen.com.

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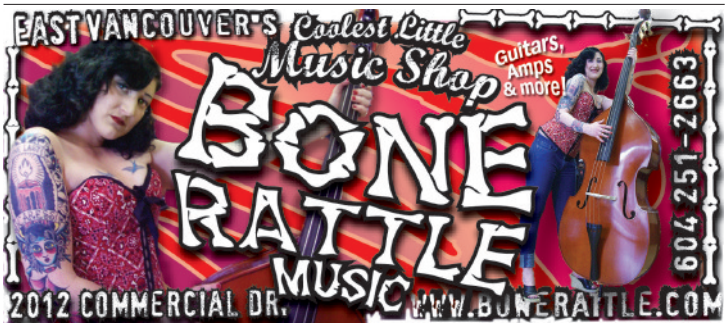

Offer subject to change without notice. *LG Eve available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan. Other devices featured available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan having min. combined monthly service fee of $45.
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For the chef

Gourmet Today, edited by Ruth Reichl, features more than 1,000 recipes including some for meals that are ready in 30 minutes or less. Available for $49.95 at Indigo and Chapters stores, or $32.96 online at chapters.indigo.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

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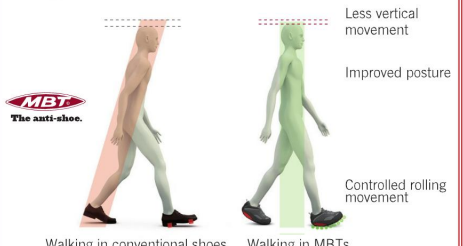

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Books kids will love

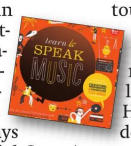
BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

From an epic journey in the Norwegian bush to a junior jaunt through the music industry, Metro's holiday book picks for kids focus on accomplishment, whether it's mastering a new skill or overcoming the odds.

Give your eight- to 12-year-old one of these good reads, marking 2009 highlights in youth publishing.

Learn to Speak Music

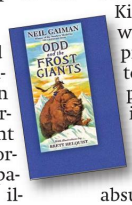
Author: John Crossingham
Publisher: Owlkids Books
Price: $19.95 (paperback)



The language of music is universal and in this fully illustrated and informative guide, Toronto-based musician John Crossingham (who plays with Broken Social Scene) is your MSL guide to reaching rock star status. Aimed at fostering kids' inspiration and innate musical ability, the motivating manual covers all the technical bases from choosing an instrument, forming a band and recording, to hands-on marketing techniques like designing T-shirts and concert posters.

Odd and the Frost Giants

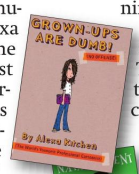
Author: Neil Gaiman
Publisher: Harper
Price: $19.99 (hardcover)



For the followup to his Newbery Medal-winning novel, The Graveyard Book, English author Neil Gaiman enters the winter-touched ancient forests of Norway, accompanied by scenic illustrations by Brett Helquest. After the death of his father and an accident that crippled his own leg, it seems young Odd is stuck in a run of bad luck. But he becomes a good omen for Asgard, city of the gods, when he discovers he may have what it takes to liberate it from the occupying Frost Giants.

Grown-Ups Are Dumb (No Offense)

Author: Alexa Kitchen
Publisher: Disney Hyperion
Price: $11.50 (paperback)



She's bold, she draws, she writes ... and she's only 12 years old. Massachusetts-based Alexa Kitchen, "the world's youngest professional cartoonist," has published comic books since age five and her latest collection takes aim at absurd moms, dads and adults everywhere. Mixing one-off strips with series character cartoons featuring female protagonists like That Molly Kid, Hurricane Abby and Kathy Ford, Kitchen's comics reflect her own kid-common daily experiences. Young readers will easily relate to Kitchen's clever stories.

The Odds Get Even

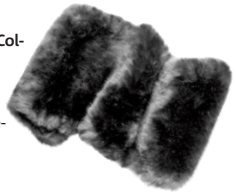
Author: Natale Ghent
Publisher: HarperTrophy Canada
Price: $14.99 (paperback)

Paranormal scares meet a trio's endeavour for vengeance in the latest tale from multiple award-winning Woodstock, Ont.-reared, Toronto-based author Natale Ghent. The namesake of the three Odd Fellows precedes them. Outsiders in school, Boney, Itchy and Squeak have long been fodder for humiliation, usually at the hands of class thug Larry Harry. Finally fed up, the Odd Fellows decide to retaliate against Larry Harry using a haunted mill.

Girlie gift
These colourful Stylize Kids Barrettes are perfect stocking stuffers for the young fashionista. Prices vary. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Naughty & nice

Fuchsia Babydoll with matching panty, $29.50 at La Senza. For more, go to lasenza.com.



Faux Fur Neck Collar, $185, at Banana Republic. For more, go to bananarepublic.ca.

Graphic Print Compact Mirrors, $5 each, at Old Navy. For more, go to oldnavy.ca.

Man of Gingerbread mug, $9.95 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

Bath Time Favourites, $42.95. For more, go to lush.ca or call 1-866-644-5874.

Tweety Body Powder by Aquolina, $32 at Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

Mrs. Claus Apron, $34.95 at Pier 1 Imports. One size. For more, go to pier1.ca.

Harajuku Lovers Snow Bunnies Travel Case (top), $69, and **Harajuku Lovers Snow Angels Brush Case**, $30, at Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

Malibu Cuff, $36, by Foxy Originals. For more, go to foxyoriginals.com.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Real trees grow sales

For some people it's the smell of cinnamon, peppermint or hot apple cider that reminds them of Christmas.

For others it's the smell of pine that fills the house when a real Christmas tree is set up next to a crackling fire.

This year Canadians may be getting nostalgic for that smell, as the country's largest organization representing wholesalers of real Christmas trees reports a 15-per-cent increase in orders from retailers this season over last.

"I think it's because people don't plan to go away because of the recession. They plan to stay at home and have a nice family Christmas," said Lewis Downey, executive director of the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association.

Downey's organization represents approximately 1,500 wholesalers across the country. Wholesalers sell both potted and cut trees.

"Real trees smell good — a real turkey beats canned turkey," said Downey.

THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Sales of real Christmas trees are rising this year, say tree retailers and wholesalers.

According to Statistics Canada, revenues from Christmas tree sales rose in 2008 — returning to a level last seen in 2004. Others in the Christmas tree industry say the 2009 season is on track to continue the upward trend.

"People aren't going to Florida, they're staying at home — it's a nesting thing and we've seen it before in economies like this one," said Doug Drysdale, owner of Drysdale Farms near Toronto.

His farm has been in business since 1945 and operates the largest cut-and-choose farm in the province.

"As trends go we're anticipating about a 10-percent increase in business over last year," said Drysdale.

However, artificial trees remain popular, and unlike real trees they now can come pre-decorated with different sizes of LED lights, or flocked with artificial snow.

Among the trees displayed at a Sears store in downtown Toronto this year is an artificial palm tree decorated with golden LED lights.

Statistics Canada says the most popular Christmas trees are balsam fir and Fraser fir. Other species include Scots pine, white spruce, white pine and blue spruce.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Furry family fun

Your dog and cat may not know it's the holidays, but admit it, most of those pet presents are really gifts for ourselves.

Brighten the dark winter days by watching your furry family have fun, and solve some common pet problems with the following suggestions:

PET BEDS

You can get plenty of tasteful, upscale pet beds nowadays, styled to fit into your home's decor. Or you can say the heck with it and cheer up a room with a bright pink Sasquatch pet bed, "the original big foot for your little beast." If you're a fan of a certain famous colourful clog, you'll go for this one, and your pet will enjoy the cosy cave made by the shoe shape. ($99.95 at sasquatchpetbeds.com.)

If you prefer the recycled approach, the Molly Mutt pet duvet can be used to cover an old bed, or stuff it with old blankets, clothes, pillow, towels, even old stuffed toys to make a bed and keep more stuff out of landfills. (Different sizes, shapes and fabric patterns $20-$45, mollymutt.com.)

CHEW TOYS

If your dog is a tough chewer, check out Goughnuts. In stick and round doughnut shapes, these aren't cheap (around $20 at goughnuts.com), but it's worth it, because they come with a lifetime guarantee. If your dog manages to chew down to the red inner safety indicator, you can return the toy to the manufacturer for a replacement.

FOR FUN

Get tired of throwing that fetch toy over and over? Use one that will make you laugh: The Humunga Stache from Moody Pet, which makes your dog look as if he has a huge handlebar moustache. ($12 at moodypet.com/humungastache.html.)

Or why not give your furry friend Max and Ruffy's organic dog treats? They come in three cool varieties: The Molasses Explosion 1919, a delicious-smelling pumpkin flavour, and "Wolf Peach and Herb," which tastes like pizza. They're designed for dogs, but Jessica Simon of pet boutique Living Ruff in Silver Spring, Md., says that one of her human staff was eating so many of the samples that she had to buy her own box. ($8.50-$9.50 at maxandruffys.com.)

The Humunga Stache, $12.

This Sasquatch pet bed is $99.95 at sasquatchpetbeds.com.

CAT TREATS

Love the cat, hate the hairballs? You can use those products in a tube, but they're messy and some cats don't like them. Try the Hairball soft treats by Pet Naturals of Vermont. Your cat will never know that the tasty chicken liver-flavoured morsels are designed to prevent a nasty problem. (Around $7, available at major retailers; petnaturals.com.)

The Molly Mutt pet duvet, $20-$45.

LASER LIGHTS

Got a cat that's obsessed with those little laser lights? Try the Bada Beam automatic rotating laser toy. Living Ruff customer Eric Robbins is such a fan that he's made three of his friends buy it. "The Bada Beam is not for pets. It's for owners to be entertained by pets," says Robbins. Some cats chase it, but his Otis sits and stares "and sticks his paw out every once in a while in a vain attempt at catching the little red dot," he says. "Then when you turn it off, he meows incessantly, and not your typical meow. More like a cat in heat during a full moon." (Around $14.95 at major retailers including jbpet.com/Bada-Beam,1230.html.)

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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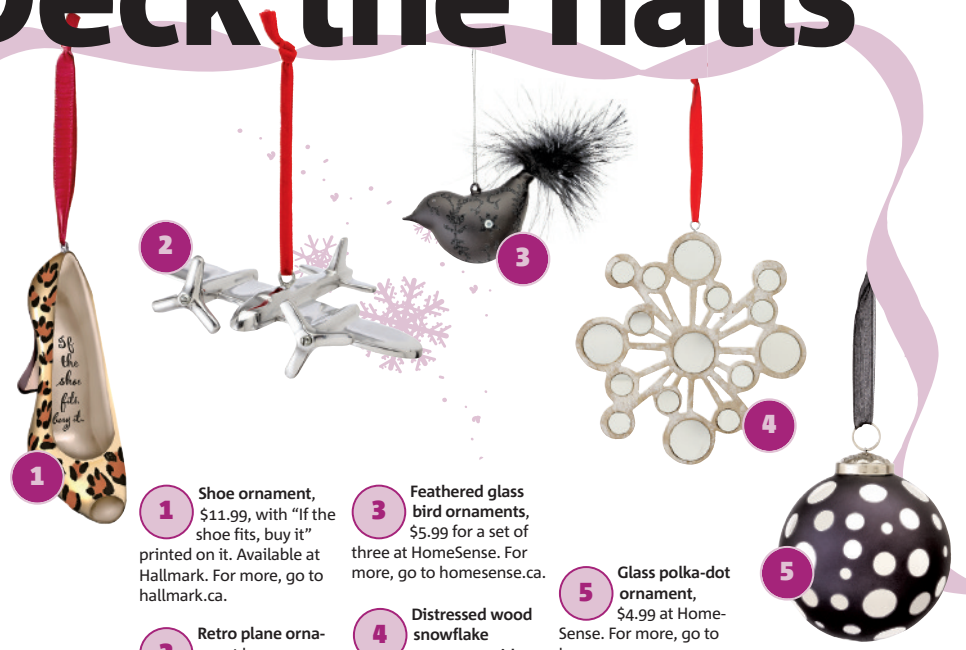
Holiday Shopping Guide

Deck the halls



1 **Shoe ornament,** $11.99, with "If the shoe fits, buy it" printed on it. Available at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

2 **Retro plane ornament** by HomeSense, $5.99. For more, go to homesense.ca.

3 **Feathered glass bird ornaments,** $5.99 for a set of three at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.

4 **Distressed wood snowflake ornament with mirrored detail,** $5.99 at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.

5 **Glass polka-dot ornament,** $4.99 at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.

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Metro Homes

New mag

Mike Holmes, who launched a home renovation magazine this week will be signing copies of the debut issue and promoting it across Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Thrilling **theatre, cozy comfort**

EMMA YARDLEY
for Metro Canada

A movie theatre may have a booming sound system and a screen the size of a house but sometimes the ease of watching a film in the comfort of your own living room wins out.

"The key to achieving a true theatre experience at home is choosing the right entertainment system for the size of your space, your level of technology know-how, and the everyday needs of your family," says Barry Murray, director or marketing at Panasonic Canada.

He suggests looking for a system with surround-sound, true-to-life colour and HD capabilities.

"Also, think about whether the system will be used for gaming or music — there are many products available today that offer a variety of functions, like networking capabilities and iPod compatibility."

With the right tools not only can you recreate the movie theatre experience but make it even better; at home you can press pause and go to the kitchen to refill the chip bowl.

This ceramic popcorn bowl is reminiscent of those sold in theatres during the golden age of cinema. Williams-Sonoma, $59.95, williams-sonoma.ca.

Pop to it! It's easy to use, easy to clean and even easier to go back for a second bowl. Toastess Cinema Popper, $59.99, Sears, sears.ca.

Keep everyone happy with the DVD selection - one for the kids, one for the girls and one for the guys. Julie and Julia, $34.90, HMV and Best Buy; Star Trek, $23.99; UP!, $23.99; both at Zellers.

Remove the middle shelf from this bonded-leather DVD storage unit and use the space to hang a small flat screen TV. Pier 1 Imports, $749.95, pier1.com.

Vineyard to complement planned community

Suite **Talk**

DEVELOPMENT A master-planned community with a vino twist has launched in Abbotsford.

Pepin Brook will be a 100-acre full ownership residential development that includes a 29-acre vineyard, a first for the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley regions.

This niche community places a vineyard in the homeowner's backyard while living less than an hour from Downtown Vancouver. Developer Azura Management Corp. is introducing 75 exclusive Vineyard Estate Homes to Pepin Brook.

"Being able to own your dream home on a vineyard is an opportunity of a lifetime," said Ewen Stewart, Azura's president. "We've had a lot of interest from young families and baby boomers looking to live in Okanagan wine country but still wanting to be close to Vancouver."

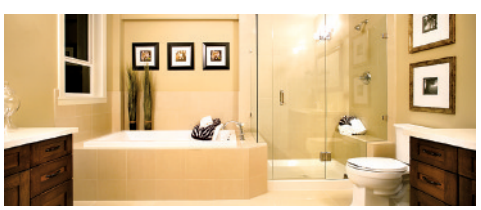
In addition to the winery, there will be several amenities including Pepin Brook Bed and Breakfast. A completed three-acre parkland features ample picnic space and a sports court.

75 Vineyard Estate Homes will be built in Pepin Brook.

A backdrop of Mt. Baker and panoramic views of the Fraser Valley further enhance the idyllic setting.

Azura's homes start at $599,000 and range in size from 1,501- to 2,947-square-feet, plus full basements. More than 10 floorplans are available and buyers are invited to work with Azura to customize their homes.Another reputable developer, Morningstar Homes, will introduce its own collection of family-friendly homes in early 2010. The sales centre for Azura's Vineyard Estate Homes is located at 2355 Ross Road in Abbotsford and is open daily from 12-5 p.m. For more inf visit pepinbrook.com

METRO WORLD NEWS



Five kinds

- Pepin Brook Estate Winery will produce five varietals of wine — Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Gamay Noir and Merlot — under the aptly named "Backyard Vineyards."

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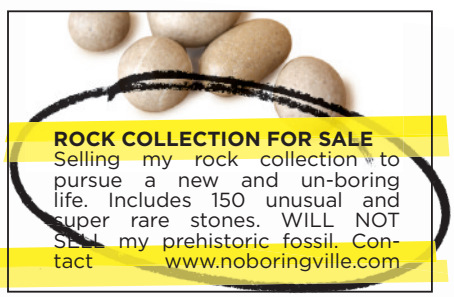
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Theallet wins fashion award

Sophie Theallet, a Frenchwoman-turned-New-Yorker. has won the prestigious CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund award, which supports emerging designers. The prize includes $200,000 US and a year's worth of mentoring. KENYA HUNT/METRO WORLD NEWS

Style

Dressed for impact

When it comes to cultural importance, there are 50 dresses that hold iconic status, according to London's Design Museum. In its latest release, Fifty Dresses That Changed the World(Conran), the museum takes readers on a literary tour of beautiful designs and the famous women who wore them, including Jackie Kennedy, Twiggy, Cher and Princess Diana. The book is available at Chapters and Indigo stores across Canada for $26. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Fashion's sweeter side

Ralph Lauren's daughter brings Dylan's Candy Bar to Holt's

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

DERYCK LEWIS

Dylan Lauren, founder of Dylan's Candy Bar

What do former U.S. president Bill Clinton, A-Rod and Janet Jackson have in common?

An appreciation for sweet treats from Dylan's Candy Bar, a New York City mecca of jellybeans, sour gums, chocolates, toffee, gummy bears, licorice, whirly pops and related apparel, accessories and spa products.

A selection of the most popular offerings is now also available at Holt Renfrew in Canada. "Everyone likes candy," says founder Dylan Lauren.

The daughter of iconic American fashion designer Ralph Lauren, Lauren says her own eye for design drew her to pop art, graphic design and packaging. She calls candy her passion, kickstarted by a Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory viewing when she was five.

And even before the launch of Dylan's Candy Bar, candy had already become part of her professional life during a stretch with her own event-planning company. "Interestingly, I always used candy as decorative accents," she told Metro.

Now her mission is to "elevate candy so it's not just for self-consumption," she says. "Good quality candy makes great gifts." It's also easy to customize for corporate clients; Dylan's Candy Bar was a sweet part of the Barbie-turns-50 celebrations earlier this year.

In-demand items include brightly coloured whirly pops, candied popcorn, super-sized chocolate bars and candy time capsules featuring popular era-specific sweets, such as candy necklaces, gobstoppers, Pop Rocks and Wonka Bars from the '70s; and Bubble Tape, Bubble Gum Cigarettes, Nerds and Big League Chew from the '80s. "Nostalgia's a huge thing right now, especially during the recession," Lauren notes.

While a variety of Dylan's Candy Bar offerings are marketplace favourites such as Jolly Ranchers, Starbursts, Hot Tamales and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, many are unique to the brand.

"We work with our suppliers to put our own twist on things," says Lauren, offering her Everything But the Kitchen Sink as an example. "The original had fewer components. Ours has seven — pretzels, popcorn, cashews, toffee, peanuts, graham crackers and marshmallows."

"Nostalgia's a huge thing right now, especially during the recession."
Dylan Lauren

Dylan's Candy Bar Birthday Cake Batter Soda Pop Shower Gel, $16.

Below, Coconut Bon-Bon Body Smoothie Lotion, $16.

Left, Chocolate Cupcake Candy Butter Cream, $22.

Above, Dylan's Candy Bar two-pound Milk Chocolate Bar, $36. Right, Candyland Gift Basket, $170.

Mrs. O dazzles at state dinner

Designer Naeem Khan created first lady's gown

First lady Michelle Obama chose to wear a gleaming silver-sequined, cream-coloured gown Tuesday night to the first state dinner held by her husband's administration.

She was tending to her hostess duties in a strapless silhouette with the beads forming an abstract floral pattern that was custom-made by Naeem Khan.

She wore a matching wrap, a stack of bangle bracelets on her wrist and dangling earrings.

The guests of honour at the dinner were Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, making Mrs. Obama's choice of the Indian-born, U.S.-based designer seem very appropriate.

Earlier in the day, for a preview of the event, Mrs. Obama wore a skirt by Rachel Roy, also an Indian-American.

"That gave us a preview that she was going to use clothes to convey a meaning," said Mary Tomer, author of the new book Mrs. O: The Face of Fashion Democracy.

"They were really thoughtful choices," she said. "The nice thing about it is the Jackie Kennedy sort of appropriateness. Most people wouldn't know one way or another about Naeem's background, but if one sentence gets mentioned to the prime minister, then her subtleness would pay off," added Hal Rubenstein, fashion director for InStyle magazine.

Khan told CNN's Larry King that his goals were to dress the first lady in something "Indian, chic, simple but very glamourous."

Rubenstein said he was impressed that Mrs. Obama used her fashion knowledge to choose a sophisticated and regal style that paid homage to India without wearing a traditional sari-style dress, which could have come off as a costume next to India's first lady.

"I think she looks fabulous," said Tomer. "She walked out in something that's figure-flattering and chic. Naeem's work is known for glamour and embellishment and this dress seems to embody that. She's sparkling and radiant."

Designer Khan is no stranger to helping women make a grand entrance; he has become a fixture on the Hollywood red-carpet circuit, dressing Beyoncé, Carrie Underwood, Katherine Heigl and even Queen Noor of Jordan.

Mrs. Obama's gown took three weeks at the designer's family workshop in India — with 40 people working on it — to complete, Khan said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama and First lady Michelle Obama are seen before welcoming India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur to a state dinner at the White House.

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ELLE CANADA

Anna Wallner, left, and Kristina Matisic

TRIED & TESTED

Anna Wallner and Kristina Matisic have become Canada's style arbiters, trying almost every fashion and cooking technique imaginable as the stars of The Shopping Bags. Their new show, Anna & Kristina's Beauty Call, is a natural progression for the former news reporters. In this latest venture, Wallner and Matisic attend coveted fashion gatherings such as New York Fashion Week and meet some of the world's hottest designers. Then, after chatting with experts, they recreate the runway makeup, hairstyles and fashions on a budget.

COCKTAIL DRESS

Bustier styles party all night long.

ADVICE Strapless party frocks look best on gals with broad shoulders—but avoid the style if you have a fuller chest. For a great fit, try one that has a built-in bra. There are two major options: tailored '50s couture in satin or '80s disco diva in Lycra.

HOW TO WEAR IT Since this dress bares the neck and shoulders, wear an ornate necklace. On chilly nights, top it off with a boyfriend blazer or cardigan. For a fashion-forward look, add leather gloves and platform booties.

SLIM

Stretch polyester, RW&CO. ($88, rw-co.com)

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Polyester and acetate, Jacob ($129, jacob.ca)

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Rihanna booked for New Year's Eve

Rihanna will earn $500,000 US to perform at a New Year's Eve party. She has been asked to sing at the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi to help revellers see in 2010 in what will be her first performance in the Middle East. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Entertainment

Purple gain

While she is said to have scoffed at the idea of posing for Playboy, Lindsay Lohan is reportedly ready to get provocative for a photo spread in France's Purple magazine. LIFE & STYLE WEEKLY

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Rihanna makes R-rated return

Susan Boyle, Adam Lambert and Shakira also release new music this week

Rihanna

Album: Rated R
Label: Def Jam/Universal
Rating: ●●●½

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE relationship trauma to get the creative juices flowing. On Rihanna's fourth record the Barbados-born starlet turns her terrible experiences with Chris Brown into a fiery and moving disc. While there's nothing explicitly referencing Brown's brutal attack, lines like "I thought I saw your potential, guess that's what made me dumb," on Stupid in Love does give listeners a glimpse into Rihanna's complex life. Musically, most of the tunes are stellar — they're haunting, dark and befitting of the album's name. There's nothing quite as catchy as Umbrella, but this is still a repeat-worthy record.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Adam Lambert

Album: For Your Entertainment
Label: RCA/Sony
Rating: ●●●½

ADAM LAMBERT IS an Idol with staying power. And every time he gets kicked off a TV show for being provocative, just adds to his attraction. (Didn't they try that in the '50s with Elvis?). He's got it all, maybe a little bit too much. But the talent is unmistakably there, whether he's performing vocal acrobatics a la Freddy Mercury (opening track Music Again) or crooning out heartfelt love aches (Broken Open). The theatrical chameleon who mesmerized American Idol viewers continues to try on new clothes and his fans will happily take in the fashion show. Lambert's debut album suffers at times from the heavy hand of Idol production techniques. It will be interesting to see what he has in store for us with his next.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Susan Boyle

Album: I Dreamed a Dream
Label: Columbia/Sony
Rating: ●●●

JUST THE THOUGHT of Susan Boyle covering Wild Horses, the Rolling Stones' classic country raunch ballad, should be enough to send music fans running for manure shovels. But sometimes it's best to leave preconceptions at the stable door. Boyle somehow pulls off the impossible. There is a wonderfully unique lilt to her English schoolgirl voice that drags the song's full five minutes. Ditto with her Streisand-like take on the great American standard, Cry Me a River. Yet, one has to wonder if the world really needs more recorded versions of Amazing Grace, Silent Night, or ... gasp ... The Monkees' Daydream Believer.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Rihanna has turned her experiences with Chris Brown into the fiery and moving new album Rated R.

Shakira

Album: She Wolf
Label: Epic Sony
Rating: ●●●

YOU CAN APPROACH this album in one of two ways — 1) the latest instalment of trash from the jiggle queen of pop, or 2) an artfully crafted piece of camp to be taken with a nod and a wink rather than a snicker and a sneer. Let's say we give Shakira the benefit of the doubt and go with Door No. 2. There had to be a comic hand at work crafting lyrics like "I'm starting to feel just a little abused, like a coffee machine in an office." Shakira even injects some klezmer clarinet into the sex-starved chorus of Long Time. And could anything be more hilarious than Shakira asking "where are all the men in this town?" But seriously, folks, Shakira shows some decent vocal chops here, especially when the Auto-Tune gets (apparently) turned off on tracks like Gypsy and Did It Again.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Lady Gaga

Album: The Fame Monster
Label: Interscope/Universal
Rating: ●●●

WITH HER FLAMBOYANT behaviour and over-the-top costumes, it's easy to forget that it was Lady Gaga songs that catapulted her into the spotlight. Her new eight-song EP — which is also packaged with her debut as a deluxe version — pushes her songwriting skills (and those of her songwriters) even further, tackling Shakira-like Latin on Alejandro and jangly soul on Teeth. She still employs epic electro and wild lyrics, but it's clear that Gaga doesn't want to be a one-album wonder.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

AlbumReviews

music@metronews.ca

Jully Black

Album: The Black Book
Label: Universal
Rating: ●●½

THERE'S ONE INDISPUTABLE fact about Toronto's Jully Black: She may have the best pipes in the country. Unfortunately, she's never quite found out how to turn her talent into worldwide success. Her latest won't achieve that goal — it's a misguided attempt at broadening her fan base by tackling run-of-the-mill rock. Recalculate is her biggest miss — it's a driving guitar-soaked track that could be sung by any popular singer. The new direction dilutes her voice. It's the R&B tunes on this record that standout, because they show off her range. Let's hope her rock experiment ends soon.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

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Wedding bells for Penélope?
Penélope Cruz is rumoured to be getting married in December. The Spanish actress is reportedly planning her wedding to long-term boyfriend Javier Bardem for next month and is shopping for a dress. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Wave North is the latest album from the Sunparlor Players.

No place like home

Sunparlour Players cover familiar ground

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

In Concert

Catch Sunparlour Players tonight at the Railway Club.

Longing for home, or at least reminiscing about it, has long been a favourite topic among songwriters. Joel Plaskett's done it on his new record, The Weakerthans famously chronicled their home town in I Hate Winnipeg, and now Andrew Penner, lead singer for the Sunparlour Players, has tackled this topic on his group's lastest record, Wave North.

"It's the fact that you leave and think about the areas that affected you," says Penner, who grew up on a farm near the small town of Leamington, which is part of the Sunparlour district in southwestern Ontario. "If I still lived in the area I grew up in I wouldn't be writing these songs."

One track, Battle of '77 is, on the surface, about two dueling farming families separated by a road. While Penner's family didn't literally fight with their neighbours, it's still about the problems with small town life.

"For me that song is about people killing each other with kindness in small towns," he says. "All they do is smile and nod, but never really talk or engage."

Other songs can be more explicitly tied back to Penner's personal history. The song Nuclear is about growing up near the Fermi 2 reactor, while Mersea Community Horn Club is about the township the songwriter grew up in.

But, while there is a strong sense of longing in these songs, he's not championing where he came from. "This whole idea of nostalgia — I don't think it's about glorifying the place I came from. It's more like I'm trying to illuminate it. When you put a light on something, it can show the beauty in it but that doesn't mean it's a good thing."

With vivid imagery and thoughtful lyrics strewn all over the record, listeners won't be able to help think about their own hometowns. That's also partly due to the grounded and folky musical style the group has become known for. It's Neil Young-meets-Canadian alt-country with a dash of Adam Duritz-like vocals — an ideal recipe for songs about home.

Penner points out that the record's not all about his past; a main theme relates to buildings, both in the physical and philosophical way. "There's a lot of stuff about building things and taking things down," he says. "That's a huge part of life once you leave home, because you're building another one, recreating the while idea of home."

Mystery of The xx

British band gives R&B futuristic spin on debut album

CAM LINDSAY
for Metro Canada

The music may not be loud, but The xx's debut album is innovative, uplifting and seductive.

The xx could be a true enigma. The mysterious name, the symbolic use of the letter x, a colour palette restricted to only black and white, and that sound — a futuristic spin on R&B full of affecting voices, snapping rhythms, deep bass grooves, reverberating guitar twists and pale keyboard flecks, all broadcasting like a midnight radio transmission.

But singer-guitarist Romy Madley Croft isn't trying to manufacture such an image. The way she discusses her London-based band with singer/bassist Oliver Sim and producer Jamie Smith (former guitarist Baria Qureshi recently left the band during their current tour because of exhaustion) shows there's nothing to hide with The xx.

According to Croft, their debut album, xx, is so relaxed and cool simply because it reflects the type of people they are. "We're all pretty chilled out people, I think were all similar in that way," she admits. "None of us are loud or in your face, so it wouldn't be very useful for the music to be so."

The music may not be loud, but it is definitely innovative, uplifting and seductive. Croft says their inspiration came from all sorts of avenues.

"I love all kinds of music, we're not really into sticking to genres," she says. "Personally, I find the vocal melodies of R&B and pop exciting. And we're all fans of bass, which R&B and hip hop generally have a lot of."

Croft credits Smith, a fledgling music producer, as a big part of shaping The xx's unique sound. "Jamie knows how we should sound. We have a very honest relationship with him," she explains. "We're just lucky that Jamie has the knowledge to enable us to be self-contained in recording and producing."

In Concert

- Catch The xx tonight at the Commodore Ballroom.

Smith helped establish their sound through the use of an MPC, a Japanese-made sampler and MIDI sequencer that ended up reinventing their performances by replacing the backing CDs the band had been using for gigs.

"If you go out of time with a CD, its hell," Croft admits. "Having Jamie on MPC means we can feel like a live band. If we go out of time, at least we can go out of time together."

With just three members remaining, their meticulous sound could be a challenge to reproduce live, but Croft downplays this. "There are a lot of subtleties that we need to get right, but it doesn't feel too difficult this way. We just need some quiet time before the gig."

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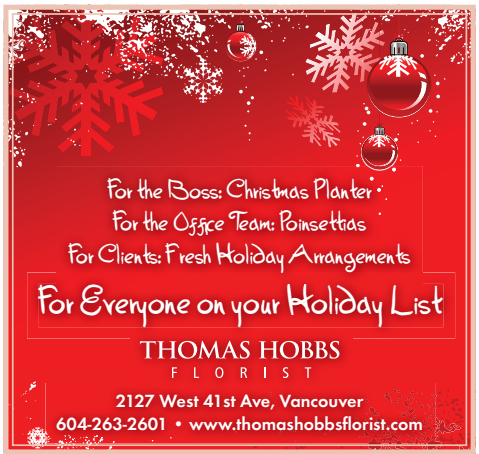


Hoffman skips Fockers reunion

Dustin Hoffman will be absent from the sequel to Meet the Fockers — he's refused to sign up for the latest installment of the comedy franchise. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sting's spooky take on Christmas

Sting and his wife Trudie keep with tradition on Christmas Eve: They go to a local church, sing along to carols, then head back home to their English estate to open presents with their family.

It's a cheery scene one would expect during the holiday season. But that kind of celebratory mood is absent on his latest album, If On A Winter's Night.

Instead, the seasonal offering features the rocker's interpretations of traditional British songs, ranging from carols to lullabies, that sombrely mark the winter season — definitely not the kind of music for that tree-trimming party.

"I wanted to present something slightly different," explains a bearded Sting.

Q Had you rejected doing a traditional Christmas album in the past?

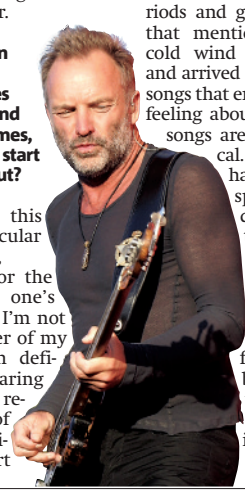
A I don't think there's any need for me to do one of those kind of records. I think there are enough of them out there and my feeling toward the season is a little bit more ambiguous (laughs). So just to be truthful to my own sensibility, I need to acknowledge that the season is not all joy and light for a lot of people. It's tough — environmentally, emotionally, spiritually. So I wanted to achieve some sort of balance between that sense of traditional Christmas and being home and being warm and being cozy, and also the opposite of those things. A lot of people suffer.

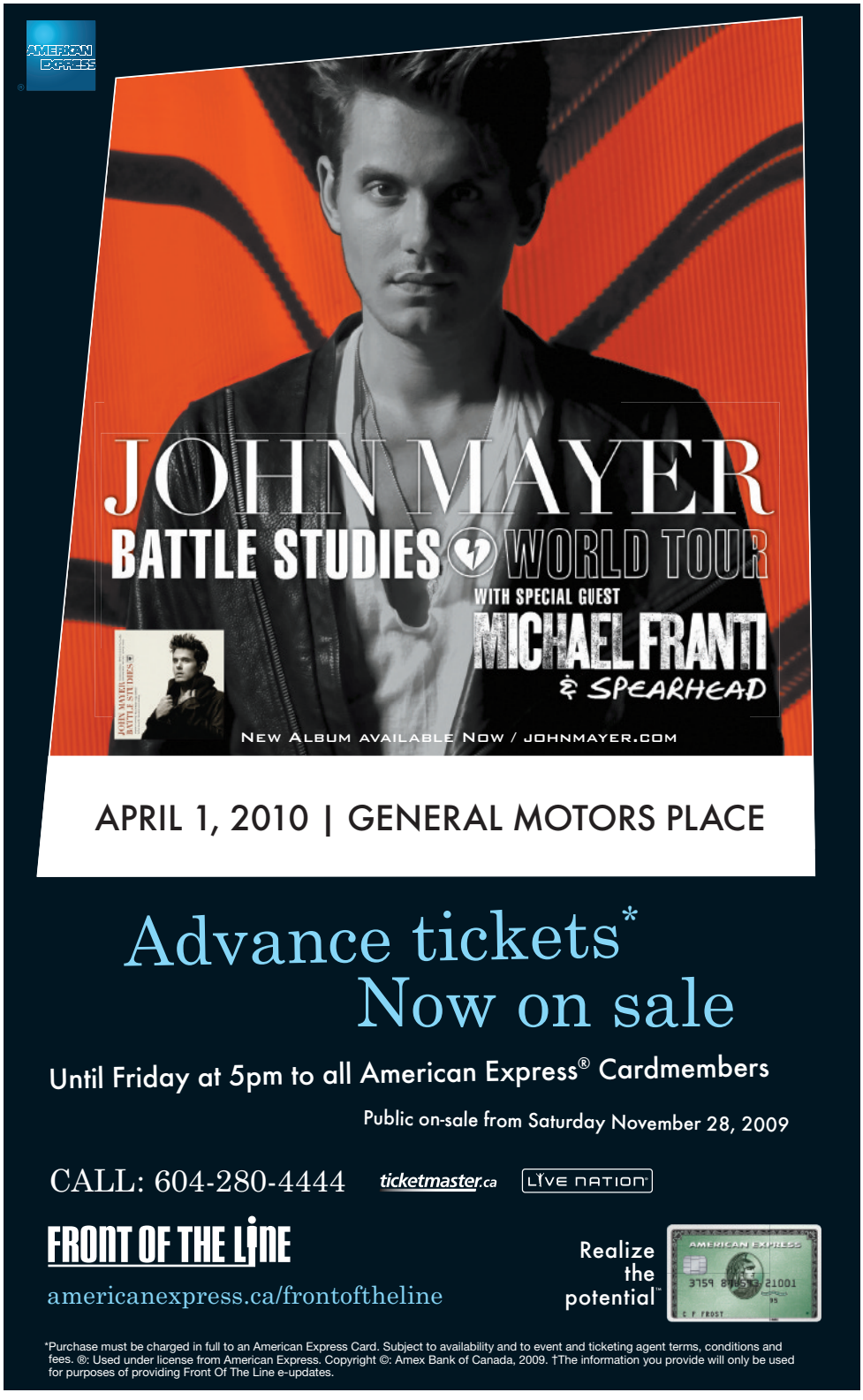
Q When the leaves start to fall and the snow comes, what do you start to think about?

A At this particular time, preparing for the winter of one's life. I'm 58. I'm not in the winter of my life but I'm definitely preparing for it, so it reminds you of your mortality, the short span of years we have on the planet, what to do with that, how to be useful, how to be meaningful.

Q How does one prepare for that?

A I don't know yet (laughs). I think this kind of work for me, this kind of creative work, is my preparation. This is my realm. I did a lot of research for this record. I looked at songs from all different cultures and time periods and genre, anything that mentions snow, ice cold wind or Christmas, and arrived at like 15 or 16 songs that encapsulated my feeling about it. All of the songs are kind of magical. All the stories have a kind of spooky, ghostly quality about them because I think winter's the seasons of ghosts ... I like the season, I like it, I look forward to it, but at the same time, it has a scary aspect to it. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





Dancing judge undergoes spinal surgery
Dancing With the Stars judge Carrie Ann Inaba was scheduled to have surgery yesterday morning in Los Angeles to relieve pressure and stiffness in her neck caused by spinal stenosis. PEOPLE.COM

Court grants Polanski bail

Pays up $4.5 million but must remain under house arrest

The Swiss Criminal Court granted director Roman Polanski bail on Wednesday, accepting US$4.5 million to allow him to remain under house arrest and monitored by an electronic bracelet at his chalet in the Swiss resort of Gstaad.

The Swiss Justice Ministry, which ordered him arrested on Sept. 26 as he arrived in Zurich to receive a lifetime achievement award at a film festival, said it still viewed him as a flight risk. But Polanski wasn't immediately released. He will stay in prison for up to 10 days while the Swiss government decides whether to appeal.

The verdict does not affect the Swiss Justice Ministry's ongoing assessment of whether Polanski should be extradited to the United States for having sex in 1977 with a 13-year-old girl, after plying her with champagne and a Quaalude pill at a modelling shoot.

He was initially indicted on six felony counts, including rape by use of drugs, child molesting and sodomy. Polanski pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of unlawful sexual intercourse. In exchange, the judge agreed to drop the remaining charges and sentence him to prison for a 90-day psychiatric evaluation.

The evaluator released Polanski after 42 days, but the judge said he would send him back to serve out the 90 days. Polanski then fled the country on Feb. 1, 1978, the day he was to be sentenced and has lived in France since.

Director Roman Polanski will be monitored by an electronic bracelet while under house arrest in at his Swiss chalet.

"The 76-year-old appellant is married and the father of two minors," the court said, as it considered Polanski's offer of a cash bail secured by his apartment in Paris. "It can be assumed that as a responsible father he will, especially in view of his advanced age, attach greater importance to the financial security of his family."

"We will decide quickly on whether to order his release or file an appeal with the Federal Tribunal," Justice Ministry spokesman Folco Galli said. Authorities had 10 days to refer the matter to the tribunal, Switzerland's highest court, but Galli said they would make their decision before that. The Federal Tribunal said it had yet to receive an appeal. The decision came as a surprise. Swiss legal experts had said earlier that Polanski's chances of bail were slim.

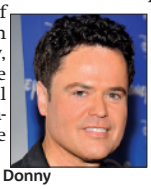
Polanski claims the judge and prosecutors in his initial trial acted improperly. A California appeals court will listen to oral arguments from his attorneys next month. They will be urging the court to order a lower court to decide whether to dismiss charges against the fugitive director, whether he is present or not.

A decision on extraditing Polanski to Los Angeles is still pending, and would also be subject to appeals.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Osmond: latest champ on Dancing with the Stars

TELEVISION Donny Osmond was declared the new champion of Dancing With Stars on Tuesday, taking home the show's mirror ball trophy in the season finale of the program.



Donny Osmond

The former teen pop star of the singing Osmond family said the show has been a highlight in a career of ups and downs.

"I did it!" he exclaimed, then promptly rushed to the audience, plucked out his wife, Debbie, and carried her across the stage. Helping push Osmond over the top was the tango he performed with his professional dancing partner, Kym Johnson. Judge Carrie Ann Inaba hailed it as "artistry in motion."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Entertainment in brief

COMEBACK Julie Andrews will return to the British stage at London's 02 Arena on May 8, 30 years after her last appearance. "To perform once again in my homeland will be a wonderful moment," she said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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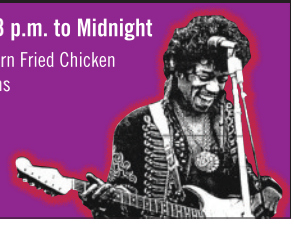

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primetime 11/26/09	251	308	3 CBC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Carbon Hunters (N) (CC)		The Border "Dark Ride" (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	254	-	9 OMNI	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		The Simpsons
	250	321	5 CTV	etalk (CC)	Access H.	The Vampire Diaries (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist "Redemption"		CTV News
	-	-	10 JOY	Frasier (CC)	The Insider	Stargate SG-1 "Crystal Skull"		Supernatural (CC)		Perspectives	Ek Noor	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Survivor: Samoa (N) (CC)		The Office "Niagara" (CC)		90210 (CC)		News
	256	389	12 VI	Degrassi: TNG	TMZ (N) (CC)	Cinderella Man ★★★ (2005, Biography) Russell Crowe, Renée Zellweger, Paul Giamatti. (CC)						A News (N)
	253	359	13 CITY	The Office	The Office	30 Rock	30 Rock	Curb-Enthsm	Curb-Enthsm	The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		The CityNews
	-	-	14 CW	The Office	The Office	The Vampire Diaries (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Survivor: Samoa (N) (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist "Redemption"		KIRO 7 News
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	The Office "Niagara" (CC)		NBC's People of the Year (N)		The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		KING 5 News
	602	568	19 W	Old Christine	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Grocery Bag	Confidential	Confidential	Divine Design	Divine Design	Don't Move
	288	380	24 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving		Beyoncé ... I Am Yours (N)		Paul McCartney		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	28 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Home for the Holidays ★★ (1995, Comedy) Holly Hunter.				Seinfeld	King	Cheers (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	An Affair to Remember ★★★ (1957, Romance) Cary Grant.				Harry and Tonto ★★★ (1974) Art Carney, Ellen Burstyn.				Magnificent
	290	382	23 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Night at the Museum ★★ (2006) Ben Stiller. Premiere. (CC)				Q13 FOX News at Ten (N)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Sherlock Holmes		Red Green	Being Served	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		This Old Hse.	Hometime
	296	654	34 SBK	The Office	Name Is Earl	Frasier (CC)	'70s Show	South Park	Half & Half	Paid Program	Hatchett	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	The Vampire Diaries (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		KTLA Prime News (N) (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66 WGN	WGN News	NBA Basketball Chicago Bulls at Utah Jazz. (Live) (CC)					Friends (CC)	Maury Paternity-test results.	
	297	652	37 WPX	NFL Football		PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Friends (CC)	According-Jim	Family Guy	South Park	Scrubs (CC)
	199	311	76 STR	CTV News	NTV Latenight News		Late Show-Letterman		Late Late Show		Inside Edition	Seinfeld
news	502	390	28 NW	The Nature of Things (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		The Nature of Things (CC)		National
	500	500	53 CNN	Heroes: An All-Star Tribute		Larry King Live CNN Heroes.		CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute				Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NFL Football: Giants at Broncos			Sportsnet	The Ultimate Fighter		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Hockey
	400	400	30 TSN	SportsCentre (Live) (CC)			Off the Record	Boxing: Rumble at Rama X			Boxing	SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Ghost Hunters International		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Ghost Hunters International		Bounty Hunter
	410	403	54 SCR	College Football		Score Now		Score Now		Score Now		Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Dangerous Drives (N)		Dangerous Drives (N)		Dangerous Drives		Dangerous Drives		Drives
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Italiano		Ftbl Today	MLS Weekly	Gol TV News	Bundesliga	Gol TV News	Gol TV News	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Drake & Josh	To Be Indie	Malcolm-Mid.	Hates Chris	8 Rules	What I Like	Family Biz	Prank Patrol	Adrenaline
	555	545	60 TEL	Stoked	Total Drama	Total Drama	6TEEN	Futurama	King of Hill	Battlefield Earth ★ (2000) John Travolta.		
	557	541	61 FAM	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School	Cory in House	That's-Raven
	553	546	63 TRE	Babar (CC)	Zigby	Max & Ruby	Dragon	Backyard	Ni Hao	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Big Comfy
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Frontiers of Construction		Victorian Farm (CC)		The Choir "Boys Don't Sing"		Cinema Asia "Iran" (CC)		Beautiful
	575	583	20 CMT	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Unstable	Unstable	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Imp.
	570	580	24 MM	Love Court	Instant Star	One Tree Hill (CC)		So You Think You Can Dance Canada (CC)				Spotlight
	600	564	29 H&G	House	House	Holmes Inspection (CC)		Renovation	Disaster DIY	Holmes on Homes (CC)		House
	615	520	31 A&E	The First 48 Graduate shot.		Crime 360 (CC)		(:01) The First 48 (CC)		(:01) The First 48 (CC)		The First 48
	628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) TNA Wrestling (N)		MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	Project 9:	Beavis, Butt
	521	560	34 TLC	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss
	616	522	36 SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		Da Vinci's City Hall		Found.	Paradise Falls	Saving Grace (N) (CC)		NCIS (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	(6:00) Eighteen (2004, Drama)		Law & Order "Securitate"		Without a Trace "Run" (CC)		Eighteen (2004) Brendan Fletcher. (CC) (DVS)		
	601	562	41 SLC	X-Weighted "Diane" (CC)		ET Canada	What	The Biggest Loser (CC)		Celebrity Paranormal Project		Trading Sp
	520	505	42 DIS	MythBusters (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Life "Birds" (CC)		Life "Insects" (CC)		MythBusters
	522	506	44 HIS	Ice Road Truckers (CC)		Ancient Discoveries (CC)		Underworld Histories (CC)		Life After People "Outbreak"		Disaster
	627	528	45 SPC	Eureka "Have an Ice Day" (N)		InnerSpace	Stargate SG-1	"Into the Fire"		Star Trek: Next Gener.	Star Trek: Voyager (CC)	
	294	650	47 TBS	(6:00) You, Me and Dupree		Lopez Tonight (N)		Very Funny	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Lopez Tonight
	619	525	48 TROP	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Outer Limits "Valerie 23"		ET Canada	TV Made	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld
	603	561	52 FN	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Family	Family	Unwrapped	Unwrapped	Heston's Feasts (CC)		Ace of Cakes
	-	-	53 AMC	(5:00) The Godfather ★★★★ (1972) Marlon Brando. (CC)				The Godfather, Part II ★★★★ (1974) Al Pacino, Robert Duvall. (CC)				
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Hot Box	Jon Dore	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	(6:30) Chapter 27 ★★ (2007)		Crossing Over ★ (2009) Harrison Ford, Ray Liotta. Premiere.				StuntDawgs	Cloverfield ★★★ (2008) (CC)	
	581	566	101 MTV	Gone Too Far (CC)		MTV Live	Sex News	Peak Season	After	Gone Too Far (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Darwin's Lost Paradise (N)		God Bless	I Prophesy	Darwin's Lost Paradise		Darwin's Lost Paradise		Paid Program
	-	-	105 MUL	Sewing Maid	Kingdom-Wind	Vancouver	Shaktimaan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Connections	Desi Rhythms	Patrol World

critics'corner

The Border
Darn, if only those pesky serial killers would stay in their own countries. In this new episode, the ICS works to prevent Maggie's (Catherine Disher) daughter from becoming the latest victim of a killer who works both sides of the border. James McGowan, Graham Abbey and Jonas Chernick also star in "Dark Ride." 9 PM on CBC

The Godfather
Well, Thanksgiving is a "family" holiday, and Francis Ford Coppola's masterful adaptation of Mario Puzo's mobster epic is an unforgettable film that invents a world of its own, with heroes, villains and a moral system unlike any other. Marlon Brando delivers an Academy Award-winning performance as title character Don Vito Corleone. Al Pacino is riveting as Vito's passionate, conflicted son. Diane Keaton, Robert Duvall and James Caan co-star in the 1972 drama. 5 PM on AMC

Burgundy is back

Starting tomorrow, Marquis Wine Cellars (1034 Davie St.) will be offering samples of the latest Burgundy releases every Friday during November and December. Tomorrow, try the 2006 Arnaud Ente Meursault and the Jean Yves Bizot Vosne Romanee Villes Vignes. ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Urban Foodie

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society-grg.ca

Signature Drink: Candy Collins
Signature Dish: Lobster Gnocchi
Rating: ●●●●½
Dinner & drinks for 2: $90

In the interests of disclosure, let me confess that I was made from my first visit to Society. Glowbal Restaurant Group's much-lauded habit of promoting from within meant that I had encountered several of the staff at virtually every other restaurant within the organization.

So, the service was superb. Was that coloured perhaps by what I do? More than likely. But to give the restaurant its fair due, the level of service was the same at every table within my sight range, on every visit. Make of that what you will.

On the web

- Read the full article online at metronews.ca/vancouver/columnist/40411.
- Chew more on Anya's blog at metronews.ca/vancouver/blog/136310.

The food, on the other hand, is the stuff that mothers glory in—at least—mothers who have a penchant for using lobster, Kobe beef and truffle oil in copious amounts.

Buttermilk-battered squid ($10) was smaller in size than I would have liked, but there was no faulting the individual chunks of steak that went down very well with the red pepper aioli. Margareta pizza ($13) with buffalo mozzarella was tasty, but too large for one. Lobster gnocchi ($18) was a rich compilation of large chunks of lobster, tarragon cream and parmesan crust.

Society is a place to have a few frolics and share some fun food. And we all could use some of that these days.

ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Margareta pizza with buffalo mozza and oregano.

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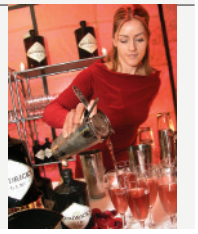
Voisey in the mix

New York mixologist and Hendrick's brand ambassador, Charlotte Voisey, was in town recently, giving cocktail demonstrations using the classic gin. Here's her recipe for the "Lust" Rose 75.

1 oz Hendrick's Gin
½ oz fresh lemon juice
½ oz rose-infused simple syrup



Dining out

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
On Dec. 8, the Refinery (1115 Granville St.) will host an evening with Cask Strength, dedicated to the joys of whiskey and food. $100 includes five-course dinner with rare whiskey pairings and a whiskey cocktail by mixologist Lauren Mote. Call 604-687-8001 for more info.

POPULAR GROVE WINES
On Dec. 2, Two Chefs and a Table (305 Alexander St.) will hold their next Wine Drinker Series dinner, featuring the wines of Poplar Grove Winery. $65 includes five courses with wine pairings. Call 778-233-1303 for reservations.

ANYA LEVYKH/
FOR METRO VANCOUVER

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Park Royal Shopping Centre
Richmond Centre

Jon Voight's Christmas wish list
Jon Voight admits that all he wants for Christmas is to meet his one-year-old twin grandchildren, Vivienne and Knox Jolie-Pitt, he tells OK! Magazine. "That will be my Christmas wish," he says. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

SATC stars not exactly BFFs off-screen?

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE... The sequel to the Sex and the City movie is in full swing, with production moving to Morocco for seven weeks, but the four stars are only spending time together on-camera, according to the New York Post's Cindy Adams, who says Sarah Jessica Parker and Cynthia Nixon are staying at different hotels. And while Kristin Davis and Kim Cattrall are both staying at the Amenjena Hotel, they're avoiding each other as well after the day's filing is complete, even dining separately in the hotel restaurant.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Richie still laid up in bed, but strong enough to type

TWEET RX Although back from the hospital, Nicole Richie says she's still home after a bout with pneumonia. "Right now it's important for me to stay in bed and recover," Richie wrote on her blog.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gaga has 'no time' for men or drugs, says friend

TOO MANY BAD ROMANCES? Lady Gaga had stopped taking drugs and didn't have time for men by the time she was 20, her friend has revealed, as female-first.co.uk reports.

Despite her claims to a life of wild partying and casual sex, the singer's best pal DJ Lady Starlight claims she was solely focused on her music when she first met her at her 20th birthday party.

Starlight said in an interview: "It was obvious even then that Gaga was going to be famous. She was incredibly focused on exactly what she wanted to do."

"I know she's talked about doing lots of drugs but by the time we met she had stopped all that. She didn't even have time for boyfriends."

Lady Starlight, 33, also revealed she and Lady Gaga, 23, always experimented with fashion and tried to create the wildest stage outfits they could dream up — though they would often not last through a show.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity tweets

Kirstie Alley is sympathizing with the birds, Rania Al Abdullah has some Twilight content suggestions, and Ashton Kutcher is pondering the really big issues.

• @kirstiealley GOOD MORNING DECAPITATED TURKEYS...sad but true, this is NOT the season for our gobbler friends to be jolly.

• @QueenRania Finally watched New Moon (for my teenage kids' sake, of course). That poor girl, no 1 should hve limited choice between vampire and wolf! Next time they should throw mummies, harpies or ogers in the mix. A girl's gotta have choices!

• @aplusk thinking about growing the hair out again.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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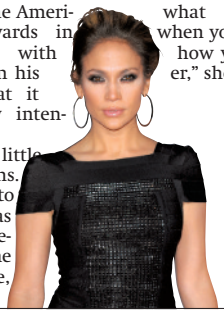
J.Lo opens up about her infamous AMA tumble

NOW IT'S JUST HER JOKES FALLING FLAT Jennifer Lopez is taking her tumble onstage at the American Music Awards in stride, joking with Ryan Seacrest on his radio show that it was completely intentional.

"Did I trip a little bit?" she laughs. "Yeah, I meant to do that. That was part of the choreography." On the serious side, Lopez is keeping perspective on the accident. "the measure of things isn't what happens when you fall, it's how you recover," she says.

METRO WORLD NEWS



Demi's cover photo mystery deepens

CHEAPER THAN MORE SURGERY The scandal brewing over whether Demi Moore's photo on the cover of W was doctored has reached a new level. The blog Pop Culture Madness has uncovered evidence that they claim proves Moore's head was simply attached to the body of 26-year-old model Anja Rubik. Moore, who was vocal about the scandal before via her Twitter account, has yet to address the latest claims.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Lambert answers his critics

SO WHAT? HE'S STILL A ROCK STAR Adam Lambert knows that, as a performer with an over-the-top stage act, audiences are going to love him or hate him — and he's fine with either, people.com reports.

"I could be somebody's role model, but on the flip side I could be somebody's worst nightmare at the same time," the singer, 27, tells Popeater. "You never know how you're going to affect people, being in this position."

METRO WORLD NEWS

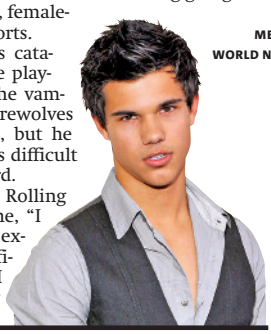
Twilight star says he was bullied at school

REVENGE OF THE NERD Taylor Lautner was bullied at school over his love for acting, female-first.co.uk reports.

The star has catapulted to fame playing Jacob in the vampire verses werewolves film franchise, but he admits life was difficult as a drama nerd.

He tells Rolling Stone magazine, "I was never extremely confident. Because I was an actor when I was in school there was a little bullying going on.

METRO WORLD NEWS



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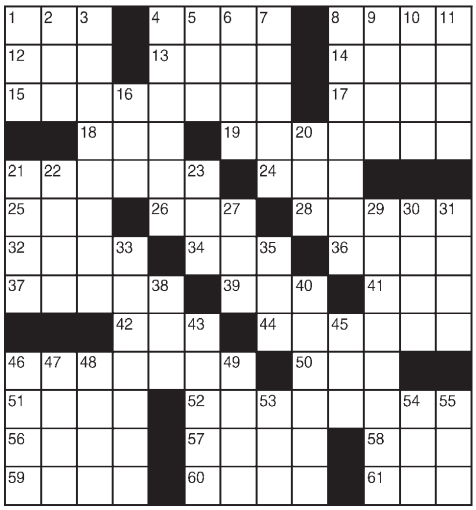


Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	7						6	
	4	8		2		5	9	
2			1		8			3
		7	8		2	6		
		1	5		4	3		
5			9		7			8
	6	9		3		2	5	
	1						4	

ACROSS

1 Pouch
4 Crooner Perry
8 Cribbage score-keepers
12 Berlin's "What'll ____?"
13 Paper quantity
14 Bound
15 Trade
17 ____ mater
18 Central
19 Israeli parliament
21 Toxic hydrocarbon
24 Perched
25 Toss in
26 Uncle, south of the border
28 Sounds from grandfather?
32 Cry
34 Saloon
36 Scoop holder
37 Twangy
39 Beam of light
41 Culpa preceder
42 Clampett patriarch
44 Cyclist's protection
46 A, C or E
50 Mermaid's realm
51 Grad
52 Shared
56 Actress Sorvino
57 Duel tool
58 Conk out
59 Nerd-pack contents
60 Stitched together
61 Mined-over matter

DOWN

1 Bracketed word
2 Commotion
3 Low chest of drawers
4 One way to pay
5 "___ the fields we go"
6 Big name in trucks
7 Portents
8 Barbie's make-up?
9 Morays, e.g.
10 Ready for action
11 Lovers' quarrel
16 Blend
20 Chow down
21 Sunrise
22 Notion
23 Pinch
27 "___ Town"
29 Shock trooper
30 Dandling site
31 Chair part
33 Nightwear
35 "Humbug!"
38 Moon vehicle
40 Sycophants
43 Chops into cubes
45 Romanian money
46 Temptress
47 Nastase of tennis
48 Swerve
49 "Unh-unh"
53 Kitten's comment
54 Balloon fill
55 Novelist Harper

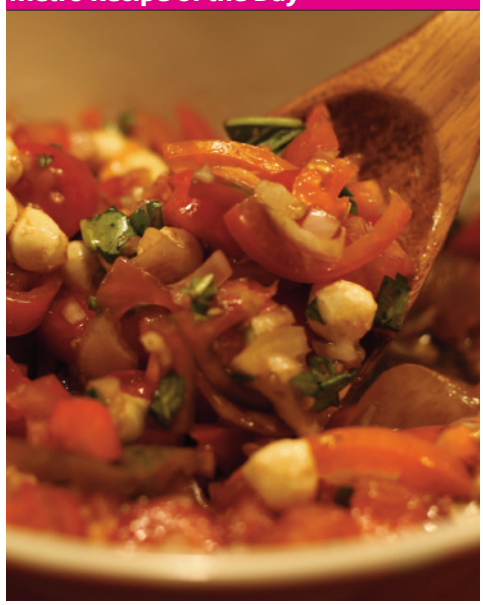
PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

5	1	2	4	8	9	6	3	7
6	4	3	5	7	2	8	1	9
7	8	9	6	1	3	5	2	4
4	3	8	7	2	6	9	5	1
2	6	7	1	9	5	4	8	3
9	5	1	8	3	4	2	7	6
3	7	5	9	4	8	1	6	2
8	2	4	3	6	1	7	9	5
1	9	6	2	5	7	3	4	8

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca

Metro Recipe of the Day



CHRISTY PENGUILY

Tomato & Basil Salad

Submitted by Irene Leung, Port Dover, ON

INGREDIENTS:

5 tomatoes or a combination of cherry and regular tomatoes
10 tablespoons of chopped fresh basil
2 small red onions or shallots
1 cup of mini bocconcini cheese balls
4 tablespoons of good quality balsamic vinegar
7 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

METHOD:

1. Wash and dice tomatoes
2. Chop fresh herbs
3. Peel and dice onions
4. Combine vinegar, oil, and basil and toss to taste in a large non-reactive bowl
5. Add tomatoes, shallots, bocconcini cheese and toss to coat
6. Serve right away, or let the dish sit for about an hour in the fridge to marry the flavours

SERVES 2
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 0 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Someone you meet over the next 24 hours will inspire you creatively and maybe romantically too.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
What someone tells you today might sound like good advice but the chances are they are thinking more about themselves than about you.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
No matter how much you have planned ahead there will be disruptions today and you are likely to get annoyed with people who let you down.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
You seem to be in two minds about whether to push ahead with something you know is right for you but may be wrong for other people.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
Someone you are fond of has got themselves into a lot of unnecessary trouble. Be sympathetic but make sure they learn from it too.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't be afraid to disagree with someone in a higher position today because if you don't they will make other demands you find difficult to accept.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Although you may be willing to change your plans to help a friend in need you must not think you are obliged to do so.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Make out that you are not really bothered what loved ones are up to today, even though you may be angry because they did not consult you first.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
The journey you have embarked on may be long and there may be no guarantees, but there is little doubt that you will get there.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Don't plan too far ahead today because even routine matters are likely to change. Your time will come, maybe not today but soon.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
According to the planets you are about to discover that your sympathy for someone you thought was in trouble was misplaced to say the least.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Nothing negative is going to happen today, so don't let your imagination run riot.

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Take Five

Metro Recipes of the Day

RYAN PFEIFFER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

RYAN PFEIFFER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mediterranean Shepherd's pie, left, with ground lamb, olives and crumbled feta, right, Brewed Beef with Root Vegetables.

Mediterranean Shepherd's Pie

INGREDIENTS:

15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
1.5 kg (3 lb) ground lamb
2 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
2 ml (1/2 tsp) cracked black pepper
3 cloves garlic, minced
30 ml (2 tbsp) tomato paste
125 ml (1/2 cup) red wine
125 ml (1/2 cup) chicken broth
1 can (796 ml/28 oz) diced tomatoes
1 sprig fresh rosemary
125 ml (1/2 cup) chopped kalamata olives
50 ml (1/4 cup) chopped fresh parsley
Polenta
750 ml (3 cups) water
500 ml (2 cups) ground polenta
750 ml (3 cups) cold milk
5 ml (1 tsp) salt
250 ml (1 cup) fresh grated Parmesan cheese
30 ml (2 tbsp) butter

METHOD:

1) Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F).
2) In a large deep skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.
3) Add onions and cook, stirring often, until tender and golden, about 10 minutes.
4) Add lamb and cook, breaking up pieces with the back of a spoon, until browned and no pink remains, about 10 minutes.
5) Drain any fat; season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.
6) Add wine and simmer until it is reduced by half.
7) Add broth, tomatoes and rosemary. Adjust heat to maintain a simmer, stirring occasionally until sauce thickens and coats meat, about 15 minutes.
8) Remove from heat. Stir in olives and parsley. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan over high heat, bring water to a boil.
9) Stir in polenta, milk and salt, stirring constantly, until smooth and polenta begins to thicken, about 15 minutes.
10) Reduce heat to medium and cook until polenta begins to bubble and pop, about 10 minutes.
11) Reduce heat to low, stir in Parmesan and butter, continuing to stir until polenta pulls away from sides of the pan, about 10 minutes.
12) To assemble: Spread lamb filling into a 3-l (9-by-13-inch) baking dish.
13) Drop large spoonfuls of polenta evenly over surface of lamb and gently spread to get an even layer.
14) Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until polenta is golden and filling is bubbling around edges. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

MAKES 10-12 SERVINGS

Brewed Beef with Root Vegetables

INGREDIENTS:

2 slices bacon, finely diced
500 g (1 lb) beef blade or cross rib simmering steak, cut into quarters
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 medium onions, thinly sliced
30 ml (2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
10 ml (2 tsp) white wine vinegar
2 ml (1/2 tsp) granulated sugar
5 ml (1 tsp) dried thyme
1 can (284 ml) undiluted beef broth
1 bottle (341 ml) beer
Bay leaves
Roasted Root Vegetables

METHOD:

1)In Dutch oven or stockpot, cook bacon over medium-high heat until crisp; transfer to slow cooker.
2) Season steak with salt and pepper; brown in bacon drippings in Dutch oven and transfer to slow cooker.
3) Add garlic and onions to Dutch oven; cook over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4) Stir in flour; cook for 1 minute.
5) Add vinegar, sugar, thyme, beef broth, beer and bay leaves; bring to a simmer.
6) Pour over beef in slow cooker. Cover and slow cook on low for 8 hours or until fork-tender.
7) Serve with Roasted Root Vegetables.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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